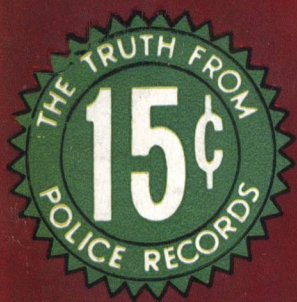


TEXAS' ILLICIT LOVERS and the HANGING SKELETON

# STARTLING Detective

OCT.



**LOVE SECRETS**  
of California's  
**RATTLESNAKE**  
**ROMEO**

**The FATAL TRYST**  
of Indiana's  
"JOY CLUB"  
**QUEEN**





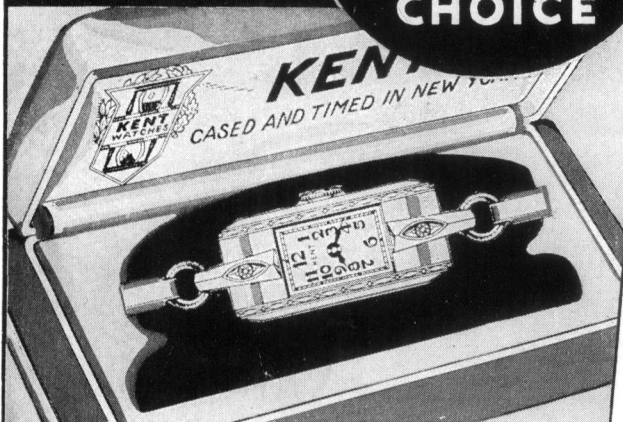
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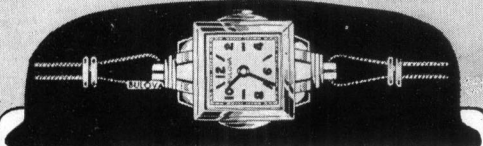


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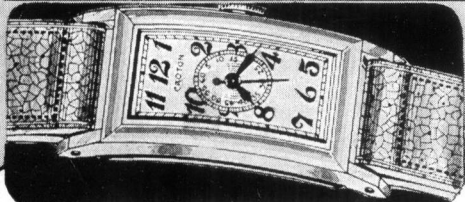
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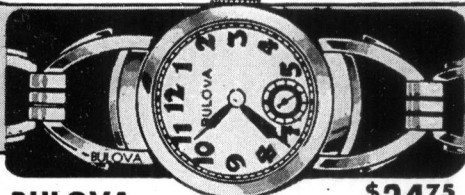
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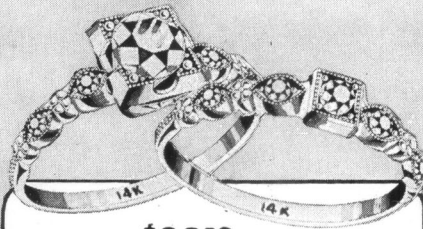
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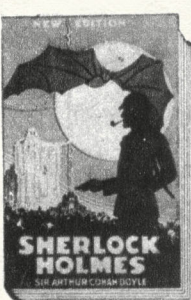
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# STARTLING Detective Adventures

Vol. XVII, No. 99

October, 1936

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*The Truth from Police Records*



# *She KILLED the Man She LOVED!*



**S**HE was attractive, vivacious, full of the joy of living. The world believed she was happily married. Apparently she had everything any normal girl could ask. But, deep inside her, there was something lacking—a certain something that could be supplied only by the stolen thrills of illicit romance. Her fascinating story, a gripping drama of real life replete with details of her life and loves, will feature the big October issue of **DARING DETECTIVE**. Watch for the title

## **Missouri's BEAUTY and Her FATAL PASSION**

*This thrilling story is  
only one of many  
stellar features in the  
October issue*

**ALSO.**

**SOUTH CAROLINA'S MYSTERY OF THE FIVE CORPSES**—A dramatic story of a sensational mass murder enigma and its solution.

**NEW ENGLAND'S MASKED LOVE BANDIT**—His features hooded from the sight of his victims, a mysterious love thief preyed on defenseless women.

*And many other thrilling fact stories*



# **Daring 10¢ Detective**



# The CHIEF'S Chair

**N**EW horrors continue to shock the nation as further atrocities of Detroit's infamous Black Legion come to light. Awaiting trial for the recent slaying of WPA worker Charles Poole, the Legion's executioner, Dayton Dean, callously described the slaying of Silas Coleman, 42-year-old negro war veteran a year ago. Coleman was murdered, Dean said, because Legion officials wanted "to see what it feels like to kill a negro."

The hapless man was lured to a lonely swamp near Pinckney, Mich., and shot to death by the Black Legionnaires as the crowning piece of entertainment on a Saturday night drinking party. The doomed man pleaded for his life, tried to flee, but was mowed down by a hail of slugs from the thrill-seekers' guns.

Unfortunately the state of Michigan has no death penalty. Otherwise these hooded terrorists who killed to see what it feels like might also see what it feels like to sit in the electric chair or dangle at the end of an official noose.

## Offenses Against Women—

**O**UT in California a 23-year-old ranch worker recently started a legal fight to escape sterilization. Pleading guilty to a statutory offense, he was ordered to submit to sterilization as a condition of his probation. Through his attorney the youth immediately moved for a modification of the sentence.

This is one type of sentence that we should like to see upheld. There is no more vicious crime on the statute books than the offense against women. And these bestial attacks continue to grow at an appalling rate.

Both isolated cases of attack and commercialized exploitation of women demand drastic punishment. The sex culture has forfeited all right to ordinary human consideration.

## Death For Death—

**W**HEN Mildred Bolton went to her husband's Chicago office for a talk with him over their marital difficulties, she fortified herself with a loaded gun. She asserted that she intended to kill herself "to embarrass him," but some-

where en route she changed her mind and emptied the bullets into Mr. Bolton instead.

The state called it murder but "Marble" Mildred, as she soon became known, was not unduly perturbed. "They don't convict women," she said, "for shooting their husbands in Cook county."

But Marble Mildred was wrong. Eleven married men and one widower took only 38 minutes to find her guilty and assess her penalty at death in the electric chair.

A Cook county jury has at last done its duty. But between Mrs. Bolton and the chair stand an appeal to the supreme court (mandatory in death sentences), the governor and hysterical public opinion. Because of the latter, especially, she will probably never walk the last mile. Muddle-headed sentiment has a way of hamstringing justice, making it open season on husbands not only in Cook county but throughout the rest of our so-called "civilized" United States.



## WANTED FOR GRAND THEFT

Joseph P. DuFrane—Age, 34; height, 5 feet 6½ inches; weight, 150 pounds; eyes, brown; hair, dark brown; complexion, medium fair; build, stout; nativity, French Canadian; occupation, bartender. DuFrane is wanted by Sheriff John A. Miller, Martinez, Calif., in connection with grand theft charges. Sheriff Miller authorizes a reward of \$25.00 for information leading to the arrest of DeFrane and his delivery to an officer of Contra Costa county, Calif.

## Wayward Boys—

**S**ENDING bad boys to prison only makes them worse. That, in effect, is the experience of Dr. Amos Squire, famous Sing Sing physician and criminologist.

Prevention, rather than punishment, is his creed. And the only way to prevent crime is to strike at its primary causes.

Slum areas breed crooks. Parental laxity in any stratum of society encourages lawbreaking. Excessive punishment is the final touch needed to make a hardened criminal out of wayward youths who might have been salvaged and restored to society.

"Pay more attention to your own children," says Dr. Squire, "as a first contribution to lessening juvenile delinquency." Those are words which every mother and father should take to heart. When parents fail, the courts are helpless.

[Continued on page 81]

## STARTLING DETECTIVE ADVENTURES' Anti-Crime Platform:

1. Stimulation of the full force of public opinion against crime.
2. Establishment of a federal school for scientific training of law officers.
3. Agreements between states for crime suppression.
4. Curbing of indiscriminate possession of firearms.
5. Curbing of activities of lawyer criminals.
6. Co-operation between federal and state law officers.
7. Orderly, lawful methods of dealing with industrial conflicts and racial antagonism.
8. Laws eliminating abuse of parole and pardon powers and separating them from politics.
9. Opposition to undue dramatizing of crime or criminals in any publication or motion pictures.
10. Adoption by states of uniform, model codes of criminal procedure.



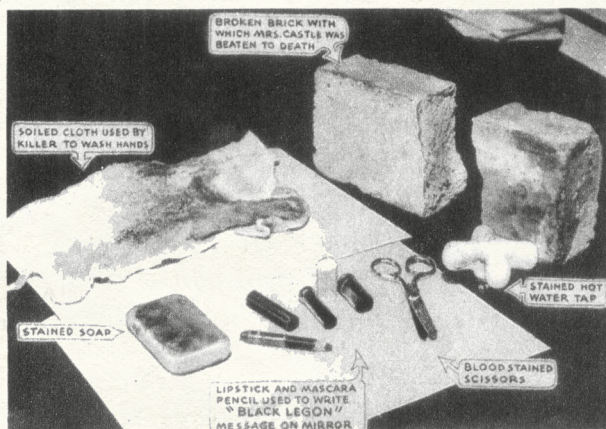


Captain William O'Brien, Chicago detective, examines the death room mirror with its weird legend and crude skull and crossbones.



Pretty Florence Thompson Castle, known to countless friends and night life associates as "Mickey," died a horrible death beneath the ruthless blows of a cold-blooded assassin.

# Tragedy of the NIGHT CLUB BEAUTY



Jimmy Thompson, handsome son of the slain butterfly, first broke the news of the nocturnal attack. Above are some of the clues unearthed by investigators as they probed the blood-spattered room in which the mysterious assault occurred.

**B**AFFLING investigators for weeks, the death of pretty Florence Thompson Castle, brunette night club hostess, is, as this is written, as much a mystery as it was when Chicago police entered the case late in June.

Summoned by a hotel employe after the woman's seven-year-old son reported that a mysterious assailant had beaten his mother with a brick, police found countless clues in the death room. Prominent among them was the legend, "Black Legion Game," penciled in mascara on a mirror.

Investigation revealed that the pretty hostess had been thrice married, that one of her former husbands is serving a robbery term in Colorado, that she was down on her luck financially. Tangled trails of many persons known in the night spots of Chicago's "Barbary Coast" touched her life. But when detectives attempted to put their fingers on one individual who might have had reason to slay the pretty butterfly, they faced a seemingly hopeless task.





**MATT LEACH**



# The Public Enemy and Crime Suppression

By MATT LEACH

Captain in Charge of Indiana State Police

THE war against crime has not been won and now is no time to rest upon our laurels deluded by the belief that it has. Despite all efforts to prevent it, the vast army that constitutes the country's criminals continues to recruit itself at the appalling rate of more than fifteen thousand a week.

Because a few so-called "public enemies" have been killed or captured, let us not deceive ourselves that victory is ours. By the time one big time gangster is arrested a dozen have been trained to take his place. This is not progress. We must stop crime at its source, must keep the criminal from beginning, as it were, and to do this there should be complete coordination of the school system and the citizenry as well as every law enforcement agency which include the courts and correctional institutions. We must present a united front through which the would-be criminal cannot pass.

## The Public Enemy Situation

ACTUALLY the alleged public enemies have been a small squad in the legions of crime. Let us check statistics. There have been sixty-eight of this type of hoodlum in the last two years in the entire nation while the Indiana state police alone—and Indiana is not a large state—handle on an average of three hundred felony or major crime cases in one week and every one of these men is a potential John Dillinger or Doc Barker.

Many of the so-called public enemies have earned their sobriquets solely on account of the size of the job or jobs they have pulled. Some of them were not even killers, had never been charged with murder. So, in the strict sense of the term, they were not public enemies any more than many whose names never received any more recognition than the mere inclusion on a police blotter. These men did not menace public life or safety except in the case of those few against whom they committed their crimes. They were simply small time hoodlums, allowed to get started, and clever enough to pick big jobs and pull them. Certainly little more dangerous, as far as human life is concerned, than the petty stickup who robs the laborer of his pay or the small merchant of a few dollars and in

a frenzy of hate or fear would wantonly kill anyone who crossed his path.

In the eyes of the properly trained officer, human life and safety is equally valuable whether it be that of a millionaire or a ten dollar a week clerk and any man who carries a gun in violation of the law and is prepared to take human life at the slightest provocation is as much a public enemy as a Karpis or a Barker. Murder, kidnaping and robbery under arms all fall into the category of major crimes whether the loot is one dollar or a hundred thousand.

The close association of criminals due to the crowded conditions of our prisons is an important factor in the crime problem. Seventy-five percent of the persons arrested for major crimes today are ex-convicts. However, this fact does not mean that seventy-five per cent of inmates paroled fail. But every first offender convicted and on his way to a penal institution is a potential big time criminal. For example, John Dillinger received his training in bank robbery in the Indiana state prison at Michigan City. The northern boys, Pierpont, Dietrich, Hamilton and Van Meter who were his prison mates, were all experienced bank men. Instead of learning to be a better citizen, his pals taught him

the art of bank looting and he graduated from a correctional institution as a full-fledged big time criminal.

The criminal classification today falls into two definite categories: First the underworld, the cogs in the great wheels of organized crime which controls dope, gambling, women and all forms of organized and systematized vice. Criminals of this type keep pretty much under cover, shun publicity and spare neither money nor life to save one of their pals. The second is composed of petty criminals who either play the game lone-handed or join together in small or organized bands that prey upon society in every form from looting hen roosts to kidnaping and murder. Criminals of this latter type have little or no connection with the real underworld, yet are by far the greater menace because they prey upon and endanger the lives and safety of the people. Also they are, in the average case, more clever, more cunning and better educated.

## Educated Crooks

EASILY seventy per cent of their number are high school graduates and a greater number of them have finished grade school. This makes them vastly more difficult to handle than the old-timers who were, with but few exceptions, a motley crew of "second story" or "pete men" who could neither read nor write. The modern criminal depends upon the newspapers for new ideas and methods of preying upon society and this explains in part the great crime waves that have swept the country. Idle criminals are ever on the alert to find new methods of crime. The newspapers give detailed accounts of a successful crime and immediately every idle crook in the country plans one like it in his section of the country. Following the Lindbergh tragedy came a wave of kidnaping unparalleled in the history of crime. Following the escapades of the Dillinger gang, bank robbery became as common for a while as traffic accidents.

But publicity is a two-edged sword. Let us see some of the ways in which a clever detective uses it against his enemy. The average crook is a natural egomaniac. Publicity is like wine to him

[Continued on page 81]

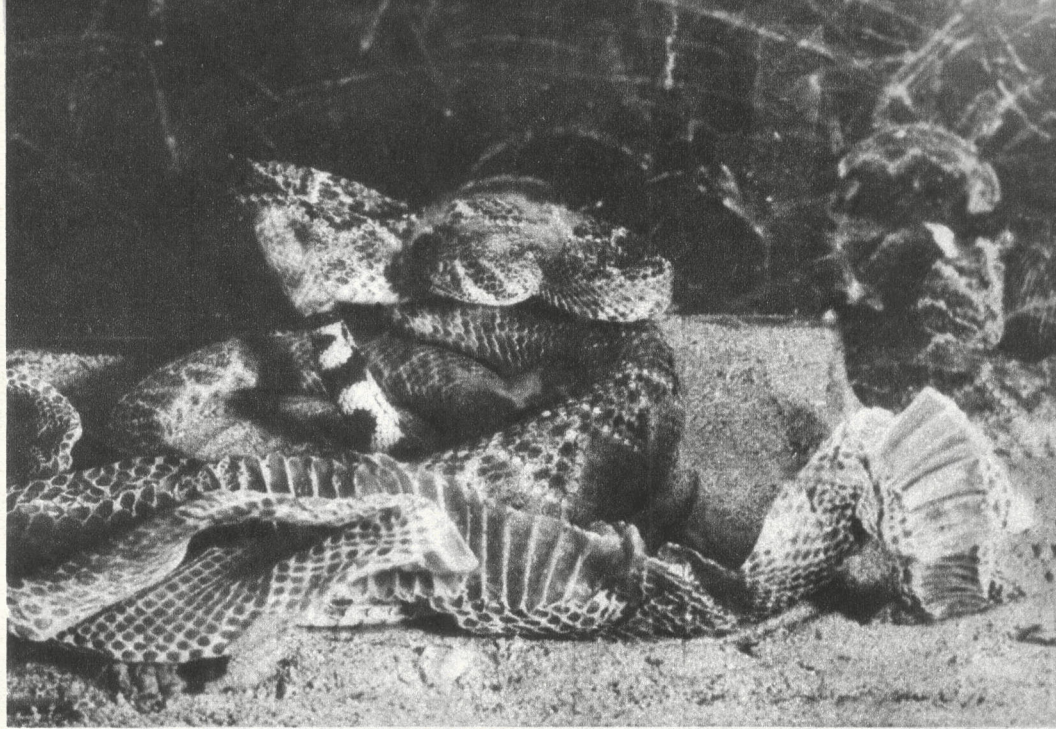
*Despite many victories for the law, this is no time for law enforcement officers to rest on their laurels in the endless fight against the underworld. In this plain spoken editorial, a noted Indiana officer presents his views on the public enemy situation, and how it should be handled.*



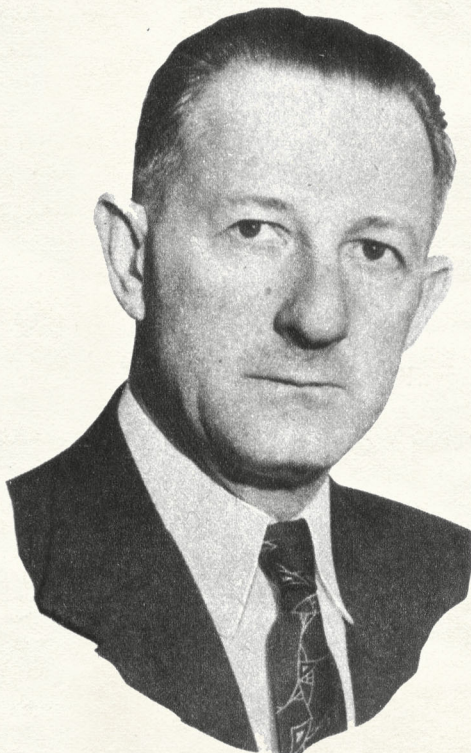
*Face down in a fishpond  
lay the body of Mary  
Busch James, apparently  
a drowning victim.*

*But her death launched  
an inquiry, weird beyond  
belief, and unmasked a  
series of love crimes un-  
paralleled in years.*

→  
A cage of rattlesnakes furnished  
a bizarre angle to the case. What  
was their connection with Mrs.  
James' drowning?



# Love Secrets of California's RATTLESNAKE



*By Deputy Sheriff VIRGIL P. GRAY*

*Los Angeles Homicide Detail*

*As Told To MARK GIBBONS*

**N**EVER have I seen a man so bowed with grief. Dry, racking sobs shook his well-built frame. His thick shock of red hair was awry and his soiled shirt and rumpled clothes plainly told of a sleepless night of sorrow. I was having difficulty drawing from him details of the previous day's tragedy—the accidental drowning of his pretty young wife. Midway through the interview, he was verging on a state of collapse.

"I hate to do this, Mr. James," I said, trying to be gentle, "but I must clear up these few details. Please try to pull yourself together."

Robert James lifted his eyes to mine.

**In this gripping story Deputy Sheriff Virgil P. Gray describes his probe into the fishpond death.**

For all of his anguish you could see the well defined, almost handsome features of the man beneath the lines etched by sorrow.

"All right," he said wearily. He led me into the garden. Beside a sunken pool he paused. He pointed to a spot over which lazy lily pads floated and another convulsive sob shook him.

"Right in there," he said huskily. "She was lying face down."

"Was she completely submerged?" I asked.

"No, only the head and shoulders were in the water, the rest of her was lying on the edge of the pool."

"That water can't be very deep," I said.

"No, it's only about twelve inches. The only way I can account for it is that she must have fainted as she walked beside

STARTLING DETECTIVE





### DEATH POOL

Pretty Mary Busch James, an expectant mother, was found dead in the pool above at the rear of the James home by her husband and two friends, apparent victim of an accidental drowning.



Photo by  
Los Angeles  
Illustrated  
Daily News

# ROMEO

the pool or bent over to watch the goldfish. She loved the goldfish and spent hours watching them."

"Had Mrs. James been subject to fainting spells?"

"We—she was going to have a baby," he said simply. "In the morning hours, I am told, women in such condition have spells—but perhaps you are a family man yourself and know about those things."

I nodded. I was beginning to feel a surge of sympathy for Robert James. He had previously informed me they had been married only three months and, calloused as men of my profession have to be, I couldn't help feeling sorry for him and sharing in a small way the tragedy which had overtaken him. It was a pitiful situation. A young couple, still enthralled with the exquisite passion of early marriage; the delirious joy of knowing there presently would be a child to bind them still closer . . . Fate, I reflected, had served him a rotten trick.

A feeling akin to resentment toward the law which I served crept over me. If ever there was an accident, surely this was one. Yet Inspector Stensland had been quite emphatic in assigning me to check up on the drowning of Mrs. Mary

James. It was now twenty-four hours after her body had been taken, on August 5, 1935, from the fishpond in the garden of the James home on Verdugo road in La Canada, attractive residential suburb of Los Angeles.

"Indications point to an accident," Inspector Stensland had said.

"I was under the impression," I said dryly, "that I am supposed to be a ranking member of the homicide detail of the sheriff's office."

There was brittle sarcasm in the chief's retort.

"And I was under the impression, Deputy Gray," he said, "that you've been in homicide work long enough to know that some homicide cases develop from seeming accidents. The preliminary report is not complete. Hop out there to the James place."

Properly squelched, I mumbled something and drove out to La Canada. And here I was now, trying to do my duty and feeling sorry at the same time for this poor devil who'd lost his bride.

"Here's a letter Mary wrote, probably just a few minutes before she fell into the pool," James said. We were back in the house again as he handed me a note

with an envelope addressed to "Mrs. R. H. Stewart, Las Vegas, Nev."

"That's Mary's sister," James said. "It's quite all right—go ahead and read it. It was here on the table when we came home last evening and found her out there—" His voice trailed off into a husky rattle and I was only too glad to take my eyes from him and focus them on the paper.

### Studies Final Message

"DEAR Sis," the letter began. "Just a line this morning to let you know I am pretty sick. My leg is all swollen, something bit me while watering my flowers this morning. I cut my toe yesterday and having lots of bad luck, this is old blue Monday, but my daddy will be home early tonite and he takes good care of me. Be sure and write me soon and I'll let you know how I get along."

I studied the note for a much longer period than was necessary, partly because I wanted to delay resumption of my talk with the heart-broken husband and partly because of the unusual scrawl of the dead woman's handwriting. I'm not exactly a graphologist, but I'd never seen a literate woman reveal such peculiar penmanship. Most women are fairly neat with their writing, but this was scratched all over the paper. Out of the corner of my eye I saw James had dropped his head into his arms on the table, so I quietly slipped the letter and envelope into my pocket.

"You said something just now about



'we' finding Mrs. James in the pool," I said. "Who was with you last night?"

Without raising his head, James said:

"It was Jim Pemberton and Viola Lueck, his fiancée. I picked them up in the city last night after closing the barber shop and we drove out here to pick up Mary. We were all going out to dinner to celebrate Jim's and Viola's engagement. When we arrived here a few minutes before eight we were surprised to find the place in darkness. Naturally, I was alarmed. I couldn't imagine where Mary had gone. When we discovered she was not in the house we walked into the garden and as we reached the pool—" Once more he broke into sobs.

There didn't seem to be much more for me to do. In my mind I was perfectly satisfied the death of Mrs. Mary James was an accident, pure and simple. I had learned that James left for work at his barber shop in Los Angeles early on the morning of August 5. Some time during the day the accident had occurred. Obviously then, there was nothing else for me to do but drive back to the office and turn in a routine report.

But I knew that wasn't enough. I knew Inspector Stensland would want

to know what else I'd done beside question the bereaved husband. Had I checked on all angles of the case?

The neighbors, for instance. In homicide cases you always check up on the neighbors. But this was an accident. I knew the chief too well, however, not to carry my investigation further.

### Questions Neighbor

MAJOR ALFRED DINSLEY was the nearest neighbor. He lived on the next street but from his rear patio could overlook the James garden and the tatal fishpond. Dinsley, a retired army officer of the British Colonials—"just an old campaigner from South Africa," he informed me in his clipped English accents—had never known the Jameses personally but had often seen the couple about the place. He seldom visited people, he said, and in all the six months James and his wife had been his neighbors, he had never made an effort to become acquainted. That last remark caused me to interrupt his amiable flow of words.

"How long did you say they've lived there, Major?" I asked.

"Why, about six months, I should say."

"But James said—" I bit off the question just in time.

"I beg your pardon?" Major Dinsley asked.

I recovered from my momentary confusion. "I was going to say James said they'd been very happy since they were married and came to live out here." With

that I murmured a hasty thanks and left him.

Six months, the Major said! But James had said they had been married less than three months!

Why had James made that statement? Or had the Major been mistaken? A small item, of course, and in unconventional Los Angeles, where illicit love frequently is the rule rather than the exception, there was even less cause for concern. But in this grim business of mine, this profession of murder-probing, you simply mustn't overlook a single angle. Then there was Inspector Stensland and his insistence for details. I checked with the James' landlord.

The Major had not been mistaken. Six months the Jameses had lived in the La Canada home with its ornamental fishpond. I returned to the house but James was away. While debating whether or not I should wait for his return, I stood in the garden and contemplated the fishpond, quiet and serene in California's blazing August sun, its lilypads lying motionless as death itself.

In the center of the pool sat an odd figure. It was a grotesque gnome about two feet high, made of cement or some such stuff, one of those figures you see in the illustrated stories of Rip Van Winkle. The ugly little fellow was puffing complacently on a huge cement pipe and gazing toward the very spot where Mary James had died. As I gazed at the gnome I thought: "If he could only speak and tell what he has seen."

"I beg your pardon," said a voice with such startling suddenness that I almost fell into the pool. I wheeled to face an individual dressed entirely in black.



Mrs. Viola Pemberton was one of the trio which found the body of Mrs. James in the fishpond. Directly above, Robert James, husband of the dead woman, covers his face as he weeps unrestrainedly at the coroner's inquest into the tragedy.



my flowers early to school  
this morning. The other good one  
but my tie of yesterday. Be sure to make  
I having lots of food me soon well  
lunch, this is all let you know  
blue Monday, but my daddy how my a day  
will be home

At left and below are shown facsimiles of the note written by Mrs. James to a sister just before she died. What peculiarities did this note (contents given in text) reveal to officers investigating her death?

Just a line  
this morning  
to let you know  
I am feeling  
My leg is all  
swollen, some-  
times but me  
while waiting

94. B. 1125-  
Las Vegas  
Nevada

"Hope I didn't startle you, Mister James," the newcomer said. "I came to make the arrangements."

I stood there a moment, gazing at the man. My natural instincts as an officer forbade instant identification of myself. For the time being I'd let him assume I was James.

"I'm from Colton Brothers," he said after a pause.

Then I understood. This was a representative from the mortuary. Quite innocently he had mistaken me for James. I explained the mistake and for a few minutes we stood there beside the fishpond, discussing the case. Then a thought struck me.

"How does it happen," I said, "that Mr. James engaged Colton Brothers to bury his wife? There must be a dozen undertaking establishments between here and your place."

"I thought of that, too," he said, "and when they sent me out here I asked about it. It seems Colton Brothers buried Mr. James' first wife."

Back in the main office that night I reported to Inspector Stensland.

"I'm waiting for a wire from Manitou, Colo.," I said. "That's where Mrs. Winona Wallace James died in 1932. Her body was shipped to Los Angeles for burial. I got that dope from Colton Brothers. And in the morning I've got to check on some marriage records."

The chief nodded.

"There's another thing, too, Inspector," I continued. "I had quite a talk with James and he's all broken up. That's quite natural, of course—except that it occurred to me a couple of times he was too broken up, if you get what I mean."

Another nod. "Better stick with it a while longer," Inspector Stensland said.

### Checks Insurance Companies

ABOUT noon the next day the wire came from Manitou, Colo. I had spent the morning going through a list of leading insurance companies. After four false starts, I hit a number. Two more blanks and then another score. I spent the remainder of the day checking with insurance companies.

I was at my desk again that night when the chief passed on his way out.

"Getting anywhere?"

"Not sure," I answered wearily. "But I'm having another chat with the widower in the morning."

It was late before I checked out for some much needed sleep. During the day the coroner's report and the result of his autopsy had come in and I spent a long time going over it. The coroner's surgeon reported discovery of several bruises on the dead woman's head and a bruise on the upper arm. Death,

ADVENTURES

Mrs. R. H. Stewart, a sister, to whom the note was addressed, helped sleuths check the handwriting.





the report concluded, undoubtedly had been caused by drowning. I was about to shove the report into a drawer when a small paragraph caught my eye:

"There is an acute cellulitis," the report stated, "probably caused by the bite of a venomous insect on her left leg. There are small marks of infection on the left ankle."

Acute cellulitis! That meant poisoning of the system. I remembered the note I'd purloined, the one Mary James had written to her sister in Las Vegas—"Something bit me while watering my flowers this morning—"

It strengthened the explanation James had given us. An insect, probably a black widow spider, had bitten the woman. The poison had coursed through her system, not sufficient to kill her but enough to render her dizzy as she stood beside the fishpond.

Somehow I felt relieved that the case was obviously an accident—until I remembered the fruits of my day's work in the insurance companies' offices and the lengthy telegram from the police department at Manitou, Colo. I went home to sleep but I might as well have joined the night shift in a steel mill. Thoughts tumbled through my head all night as I tossed on my pillow and the next morning

when I visited Robert James, he was quick to notice my bloodshot eyes and tired expression.

"You look washed out," he said.

I said something about overwork and then plunged in.

"Mr. James," I said, "would you mind telling me if your wife was insured?" I watched him closely but detected no change in his expression as he quietly answered.

"Yes, poor Mary was insured. Two policies, both for \$5,000."

Suddenly his features changed abruptly. "I've just remembered something! They both carry accident indemnity clauses which double the amount of the policies in the event of sudden death."

Bleakly I realized a day's work had been shot because he had frankly told me what had taken hours of work to ferret out. Then I remembered the telegram from the Colorado officials.

"And your first wife, Mr. James, the one who died in Colorado in 1932, the one who was drowned in a bathtub—was she insured, too?"

Right then I knew I'd drawn another blank. James never lifted an eyebrow.

"I suppose it's your duty to learn all about these things," he said quietly with just the faintest suggestion of contempt in his voice for an inquisitive copper barking up the wrong tree. "Yes, Winnie was insured, too. I suppose that if I were not so completely crushed by Mary's death I'd feel apprehensive about



#### DIRECTED INVESTIGATION

Insisting that no death could be called accidental until it was proved so, Inspector Norris C. Stensland kept his men plugging away at various angles of the case. At right, attractive Madge Reed, whose story materially aided the police and reopened the investigation when all other leads seemed to be exhausted.





the thorough way you've checked up on me and my past. I've read about murder-for-insurance cases in the past."

It seemed I was out of luck. I had one more card to play but there weren't many chips riding that final bet. I told him of the discrepancy between the date of his admitted marriage to Mary James and the time they rented the La Canada home.

This time the man's eyes narrowed as they gazed squarely into mine. I sensed a sudden hostility even before James spoke.

"You should be in the movies," he said and this time he made no attempt to hide the sneer which accompanied his reply. "But if it will help you get a promotion,



Beautiful Vera Vermillion James (left) was the second wife of the Los Angeles barber. Apparently happy, they lived together for seven years but divorce finally ended their romance. Photo above shows Lois Wright (right), James' youthful niece, questioned during the investigation, in the company of Policewoman Velma Newsome (in dark blouse).



I don't mind telling you that Mary and I lived together for three months before we were married." Another uncomfortable pause—uncomfortable for me, I mean. There was a challenging ring to his tones as James resumed: "And if you want to know why—you can find out yourself. I'm fed up with you and your snooping. I've answered the last question for you, unless you want to put me under arrest on some fool charge or other. Do I make myself clear?"

All too clear, I told myself bitterly. As far as I could see, I was all washed up on the case. Yet in that final defiant out-

burst from James there remained an intangible theory of doubt and, of course, a resentment against the man for turning the tables on me to such unpleasant discomfort.

The next day the coroner's jury returned a verdict of "death by accidental drowning." James wept as he testified on the witness stand. His grief was genuine and I was thankful that I was not called upon to testify.

### James Case Is Reopened

IN THE weeks that followed I was buried in work of all sorts. Murders and violent death. Bizarre cases of rape and assault—the grist which the sprawling county of Los Angeles daily grinds out for the largest sheriff's bailiwick in

the world. One day Inspector Stensland sent for me.

"Remember that James case up in La Canada last August?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, your heartbroken widower is having a court battle with an insurance company. Seems they don't want to pay off."

"They haven't got a leg to stand on," I said. "The coroner's jury returned a verdict of accidental drowning. What else do they want? They must be crazy to risk the costs of a litigation."

"Suppose you find out just how crazy a million dollar insurance corporation can be," said Inspector Stensland. "There must be something to warrant their action."

[Continued on page 59]



# The Fatal Tryst "JOY CLUB"

By  
*Deputy Prosecutor*  
**JAMES A.  
WATSON**

As Told To  
**VICTOR P. RANKIN**



Photo above shows the death garage where the two bodies were found. Arrow indicates where Chapman, Grace Lackey's sweetheart, was lying. At left, Deputy Prosecutor James A. Watson, who reveals the official story of the investigation which trapped the mysterious gunman.

**O**UTSIDE a brick bungalow on Carson road, eight miles south of Indianapolis, a young couple clung together wordlessly. The January air knifed through their clothing viciously but it was not for protection against the cold that they sought the shelter of each other's arms. Both were striving desperately to blot out the memory of the horrible sight they had just seen as they listened for the screaming siren that would announce the coming of the sheriff's men.

In a few minutes an official car braked to a stop in front of the house and Deputy Sheriffs Harry Cook and Pat Kinney stepped out and joined the terror-stricken couple.

"Are you Gordon Harris?" asked Cook.

The youth nodded and introduced the girl beside him as his wife. They had become concerned, he said, over the disappearance of his mother, Mrs. Grace Lackey. "She has been missing from home since Saturday," he said. "We thought that she might have come over here with her sweetheart, Charles Chapman. They planned to marry and were fixing up this bungalow together.

## Finds Shooting Victims

**W**HEN we arrived the house was dark and there was no response to my knocking. I finally jimmied the key out of the back door and unlocked it with a pass key. I found them both dead in the basement garage."

Taking the young couple with them, the officers entered the house. Kinney hurriedly made his way down to the garage while Cook remained to make a search of the main floor.

In the garage adjoining the furnace room Kinney found what he was seeking—a coach whose left door stood open. Slumped across the seat was the body of a woman. She had been shot through the head and her face and clothing were splashed with blood.

At the rear of the car, just inside the garage door, lay the body of Charles Chapman, Mrs. Lackey's sweetheart. His head



STARTLING DETECTIVE



# of Indiana's QUEEN

*Dethroned by death, police found Grace Lackey, Joy Club queen, sprawled in a basement garage.*

*A crimson thumbprint on a door was the only clue; but sleuths cracked the case to reveal a strange story of violent passion.*



This gun snuffed out the life of Mrs. Grace Lackey (below), popular "queen" of the Indianapolis Joy Club.

and face were also covered with blood which had drained from a bullet wound in his forehead.

After a brief preliminary examination Kinney turned away and went back upstairs to confer with his partner. He found Cook bending over a note on the kitchen table. The inscription was brief:

**We have decided to go together and end our troubles. Forgive us. Grace and Charley. January 7, 1934, about 11 p. m.**

Kinney studied the note carefully, then turned to his companion. "There's something screwy about this," he said. "There isn't a sign of a gun in the garage. I'll bet this note is a plant."

Young Harris also examined the note. "This doesn't look like my mother's handwriting or that of Mr. Chapman, either," he volunteered.

Assuring the youth that the authenticity of the note would be carefully checked, Kinney hurried out to call the ambulance and the coroner.

In a short time Deputy Coroner Ethelbert R. Wilson arrived at the scene of the tragedy. Coroner Wilson was well known throughout the central part of the state for his assistance in solving many baffling murder cases. Now as he entered the basement he surveyed the scene with a practiced eye and immediately went into action.

Coroner Wilson's first concern was an examination of the bodies. As he knelt over Chapman's still figure he received a distinct shock. The man's pulse was still beating faintly!

Quickly Wilson applied what restoratives he had. There was little hope that they might be effective. Chapman had scarcely one chance in a hundred of surviving. But the physician was overlooking no possibilities. If Chapman regained consciousness his statement might go a long way toward solving the mystery.

Examining the victims carefully, Wilson discovered that Chapman had been wounded in the forehead just a little





above and in front of the right temple. Mrs. Lackey had been shot three times. Two bullets had entered her head while a third had inflicted a flesh wound in her right shoulder. On the floor of the garage lay three exploded .25 caliber cartridges.

Continuing his search for clues, Dr. Wilson discovered a peculiar circumstance. The garage doors had been padlocked from the outside and a bloody thumbprint showed near the lock. But a search of the ground revealed no tire tracks or footprints outside the garage except those made by Harris and his wife and the deputy sheriffs. The killer had undoubtedly locked the garage door. How, then, had he made his escape without leaving a telltale trail behind him?

Presently the ambulance arrived to take on its grim cargo and roar away back to the hospital. Dr. Wilson and the two deputies continued their search for further clues. They returned to the basement and began a hunt for the death weapon but without success. There was no trace of the gun. Abandoning that angle of the investigation temporarily, they again studied the alleged suicide note. But it told them nothing—served only, as a matter of fact, to deepen the mystery. The three investigators went into a conference.

"I agree with you that the note left on the kitchen table is evidently a plant," said Dr. Wilson at length. "The wounds seem to indicate that. Judging from the location I do not believe it possible for either of the two victims to have disposed

of the weapon after the shots had been fired. This puts a suicide pact out of the question. This has been murder and the murderer has disposed of the weapon."

What had happened in that lonely garage? Had the couple been the victims of housebreakers who had been surprised at their work? Or was the killing premeditated—the work of an insanely jealous lover or sweetheart? Or were there still other motives, as yet uncovered? Dr. Wilson and the deputy sheriffs pondered these questions but the answers were not forthcoming.

### Discover Death Gun

ON THE following day Cook and Kinney, with Lieutenant Bert Pierrot of the city police Bertillon department, returned to the scene of the double shooting. Again they went down into the basement, determined to comb the garage thoroughly. This time their search was successful. Under the front seat of the car, concealed by a number of tools, they found a .25 caliber automatic pistol. It was undeniably the death weapon.

Spurred on by their find, they searched the car further and made another significant discovery. Under the floor mat they found a number of deeds and insurance policies executed in Chapman's name. An odd strongbox for a business man!

The gun and documents were pocketed and the investigation continued. Lieutenant Pierrot photographed the bloody thumbprint for comparison with Bertillon records and the gun and empty cartridges were turned over to Sergeant Arch Ball, police ballistics expert. The pur-

ported suicide note was given to a handwriting expert for comparison and analysis.

In spite of the finding of the pistol Coroner Wilson remained firm in his theory of murder. "It appears that the weapon has been returned there between the time we left the scene last night and the time the officers returned this morning," he said in discussing the case. "The murderer hid it in a place where we would be sure to find it but yet would appear that we had overlooked it in the first search. But even supposing that we did overlook the gun, the suicide theory would still be out of the question. The wounds of both victims were such as to render them unconscious almost immediately. It is scarcely reasonable that either would have been capable of concealing the gun in the place it was found."

The odd factors of the case had engaged my interest from the start, although at that time I had no idea that I would later be drawn actively into the case. It was the queer setup that attracted me—the concealed gun, the two victims behind locked doors, the absence of telltale signs which should have marked the slayer's getaway. Hence when Detective Sergeant John W. Dugan of the prosecutor's investigating staff was assigned to the case by Herbert R. Wilson, then Marion county prosecutor, I followed his work closely.

Reports from the ballistics and handwriting experts did little to clear up the mystery. The .25 caliber automatic found in the garage was identified as the gun which had killed Grace Lackey but the



Charles Chapman, Mrs. Lackey's lover, was also a victim of the nocturnal shooting. He was found, critically wounded, lying in the garage near his sweetheart.

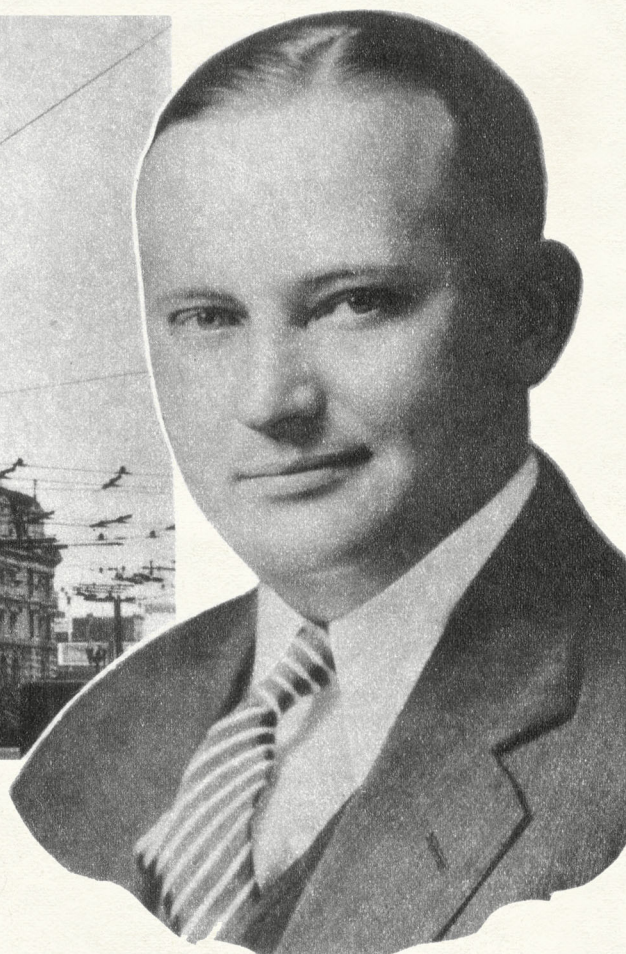


Detective Sergeants John Dugan (left) and John Dalton review the evidence in the baffling double shooting. Dugan was largely instrumental in pressing the case to a successful conclusion and secured a confession from the slayer of the Joy Club queen.





Although clues were virtually lacking in the baffling slaying, Indiana officers solved the mystery and brought the slayer to trial in the Marion county courthouse, above.



Deputy Coroner E. R. Wilson, active in numerous homicide cases, examined the victims and laid the ground-work for the successful investigation which finally solved the mystery.

hope of tracing its owner was slim, indeed. There were any number of guns like it in the county.

The statement of the handwriting expert bore out the murder theory but did not serve to clarify the riddle. He said that the suicide note did not compare with specimens of either of the victims and was apparently written by another person.

Nor did Lieutenant Pierrot fare any better with his examination of the thumbprint found beside the lock on the garage door. The records showed no similar print. That told Sergeant Dugan one thing: that the murderer was not a professional criminal. But instead of being helpful, this discovery only made the search for the slayer doubly difficult.

### Consider Robbery Motive

AT THE time of her death Mrs. Lackey was wearing no jewelry and had only about two dollars in her pocketbook. And Chapman, although considered fairly well to do, wore only a cheap ring and had but a small amount of change in his pockets. This immediately suggested robbery as a motive but we were not jumping at conclusions. Hence Dugan and I sought out the dead woman's son in the hope that he might furnish us some needed information.

We found Gordon Harris to be an agreeable lad and more than eager to answer questions and help us in any way. But he could suggest no reason why his mother or Chapman should have committed suicide. They had been going together for more than a year, seemed

very much in love with each other and had planned to marry.

He said that Chapman was well liked by his acquaintances and business associates. He was reputed to have money and considerable insurance and property.

Still probing the robbery angle, we asked the youth whether or not his mother had any jewelry. He nodded but said that she hadn't worn her gems on the day she was murdered. He left the room and returned in a few minutes with an expensive wrist watch, a set of diamond earrings, two diamond rings and various other trinkets.

She hadn't worn her jewels to the bungalow, the youth explained, because she planned to return home before going on to the party at the Joy Club that Saturday night. His mother, the lad added proudly, was the queen of the club—the most popular woman in the lodge.

At the conclusion of our interview with young Harris I had begun strongly to doubt that simple robbery was the answer to our death problem. Somewhere in the past lives of these two middle-aged people I felt that we would find a working lead. This feeling was strengthened as I remembered one of Harris' statements: "Mother was the queen of the Joy Club." That remark was significant. It opened up entirely new avenues of speculation—of thwarted love, jealousy, perhaps revenge. Promptly we set out to question some of the club members whose names had been given to us.

We learned that the Joy Club was typical of many similar groups throughout the country. It was a social organization for the benefit of lonely persons seeking an acquaintance with members of the opposite sex. The evenings were chiefly given over to conversation and cards.

From some of the more active members Sergeant Dugan learned that the attractive Mrs. Lackey had had several suitors whom she treated politely but casually. Since she had met Chapman, however, she had seen little of any of them with the exception of one man, a former sweetheart. Before Chapman had appeared on the scene they had often been seen much in each other's company. Dugan decided to pay the man a call.

The fellow readily admitted that he and the dead woman had been closely associated in business for some time but he denied emphatically that they had ever been in love or that he had ever made love to her. During 1930 he said they had lived together while they had developed several pieces of property for sale.

During 1932 they had been partners in a grocery venture and had lived together near the store. After Christmas





Now judge of the superior court, Herbert R. Wilson, above, headed the prosecution when Mrs. Lackey's slayer went on trial. At right, Special Judge Clyde H. Karrer who tried the case and pronounced judgment.



they had sold the store and he had helped her select the rooming house which she had operated up until the time of her death. The man's story was checked, found fairly accurate and Sergeant Dugan turned his investigation in another direction.

### Joy Club Casanova

FROM the hospital we learned that Chapman was still alive. He had not regained consciousness, however, and was in a critical condition. Questioning of members of the Joy Club threw some interesting sidelights on the make-up of the wounded man. It appeared that he was the Casanova of the club—an elaborate dresser who lavished gifts and money upon the ladies of his choice.

We passed over many of Chapman's lighter amours and concentrated instead upon a former acquaintance with whom, it was said, the man had carried on a violent affair. In response to our questions we soon elicited the fact that she was extremely bitter against Grace Lackey, the Joy Club queen.

"It was that woman who caused all the trouble for Charley," she said. "He spent money on her that he really couldn't afford. She had gotten all his ready money and then she wanted his car and property. He was all right until he met her. Since then he went crazy. He even took a pair of diamond earrings that he had given me and gave them to her."

The woman's statements furnished a new angle to the mysterious case. Since they were undoubtedly motivated by

jealousy, we discounted them to a large extent, but nevertheless we decided to check closely into Chapman's financial affairs. Perhaps the slayer had planned to collect insurance through the attempted murder of the middle-aged playboy.

Investigation into Chapman's business affairs was temporarily postponed, however, when word came from the hospital that Chapman had regained consciousness. In company with Detective Sergeant John Dalton and Ballistics Expert Arch Ball, Dugan went to the hospital to interview him. Ball examined the head wound and, after studying several X-ray pictures of it, gave the opinion that the three particles of metal in the skull were the cupro or nickel jacket of the .25 caliber bullet and the broken halves of the lead core.

"Bullets of this type," said Ball, "frequently separate the jacket from the core upon entering any hard, solid matter as in this case. Therefore, although it cannot be proven unless the bullet were removed and tested, it is quite likely that Chapman was wounded with the same gun that killed Grace Lackey."

Dugan began to question Chapman. "Do you know who shot you?" The wounded man shook his bandaged head. "Did you see anyone?" Again the man shook his head. "Did you shoot yourself?" For the third time Chapman's head moved negatively. Then the nurse entered and signaled for the officers to leave.

Learning nothing from the interview with Chapman, Sergeant Dugan immediately plunged into an investigation

of the man's business and financial affairs in an effort to uncover some explanation of the mystery. Thus far the case was at a standstill. The gun had not been traced. No motive for the double shooting had been established. The bloody thumbprint was worthless as a clue. There was no explanation for the absence of footprints outside the murder garage. Would the man's business dealings shed any light on the baffling case? Sergeant Dugan doubted it but other avenues of investigation had been exhausted and he forthwith proceeded with the task at hand.

### Check Victim's Finances

A CHECKUP revealed that Chapman's former paramour had not exaggerated when she said that the man had been reduced to virtual poverty. At the bank Dugan learned that Chapman's once large checking account had been reduced to a few dollars. His insurance policies, naming Grace Lackey as beneficiary, were practically worthless because of the loans which he had made upon them. His expensive home was mortgaged for more than its present value and the death bungalow on Carson road had been purchased with a \$25 down payment. Certainly, whoever had attempted to murder Chapman had not been motivated by financial gain. For if his paramour knew of the state of his affairs it was more than likely that it was common knowledge among his other acquaintances. That still left the possible motives of revenge or jealousy or the possibility of an accidental shooting during a robbery.

[Continued on page 62]

STARTLING DETECTIVE



# The Mystery of the SLAIN WIFE

UP AMID the platinum stars, resplendently hung in the silver sash of fleecy clouds, a full September moon (it was in the year 1904) rode high over the historic city of Charlottesville, Virginia. Its bright rays, filtering down through the still branches of stately oaks and lofty elms that lined the wide, peaceful streets, shed an effulgent light upon the quaint city—renowned home of Thomas Jefferson and site of the famed University of Virginia, founded by that illustrious statesman a century previously.

On these glorious moonlight nights, the street lamps remained dark—an idea promoted by the city's distinguished society mayor, J. Samuel McCue, and one which had appealed to the aesthetic

tastes of the cultured and refined of the exclusive Park street section.

The mellow night air was full of peace and calm and rest. Streets were deserted, store windows darkened and homes silent, although the night was but a few hours old. In the crowded churches throughout the city, staid aristocracy rubbed shoulders with the proletariat in its weekly worship of God. It was Sunday night and all Charlottesville seemed resolved that his satanic majesty should not prevail while "walking to and fro in the earth."

How shocking it would have been to those devout members had they known that, calmly reposing in a rented pew in one of the city's largest temples of worship, lurked the prince of demons! And how terrifying, had they realized that he sat in their midst, cloaked in the lurid mantle of Death!

Prevented from attending services that warm, pleasant evening was the slim, copper-haired night operator of the local telephone exchange.

Nightly, from 9 o'clock until 7 a. m., Virginia Bragg sat through the long monotonous hours with her eyes glued upon the switchboard. With indomitable patience and a precision born of long practice, she juggled the intricate mass of wires, plugging connections, supplying the correct time, accepting the respon-

*By Detective*

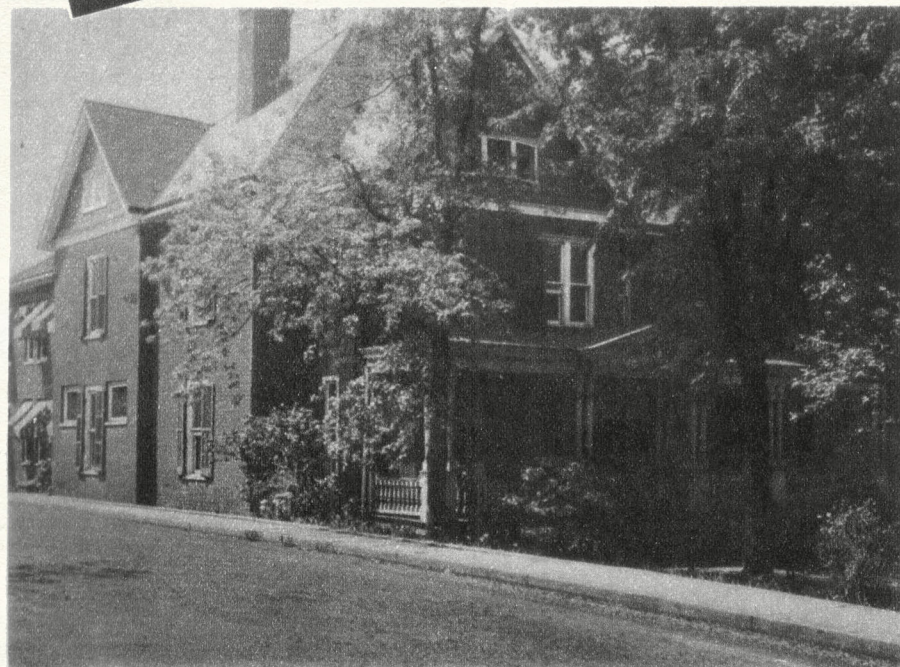
**W. G. BALDWIN**

*Late of the Baldwin-Felts Detectives,  
Inc., Roanoke, Va.*

As Told To

**WALDEN SNELL**

**A  
VIRGINIA  
CRIME  
CLASSIC**



Among the most popular society matrons of Charlottesville, Mrs. Fannie Crawford McCue, sketched above, was the victim in one of Virginia's most shocking crimes. The comfortable McCue home, scene of the murder, is pictured at left.





J. Samuel McCue (left), husband of the victim, was a former mayor of Charlottesville and was financially and socially prominent. Above, fashionable Park street as it appears today. The McCue property is in the left foreground, back of the fire plug.

sibility of awakening early morning arisers, and acting as the city's night bureau of information.

At exactly 9:15 on the night of Sunday, September 4, 1904, Miss Bragg fairly leaped from her high chair as a raucous voice crashed through the headset over her left ear.

"Quick, Central, T. J. Williams. Hurry."

In spite of the ear-splitting tone, Miss Bragg promptly recognized the caller's voice as that of the city's mayor and, in her usual courteous manner, replied, "I'm sorry, Mr. McCue, but the line is busy."

"Don't tell me that," shouted the excited voice over the wire. "Somebody is in my home. I think he has killed my wife!"

The alert operator quickly broke the connection and gave the mayor the Williams home. Listening in, she heard him tell Mrs. Williams, who had answered the ring, that a burglar had injured him and shot "Fannie." The excited voice finally burst into hysterical sobs. Mrs. Williams was jiggling the telephone apparatus nervously.

"Did you hear Sam McCue's conversation?" she inquired.

"Yes, yes," replied Miss Bragg.

"Have you notified anybody?"

"No."

"Why haven't you? Call the police. Get a doctor. Notify his brothers. Do something!"

The frightened operator called the jail, then sounded the police call. A bright red light blazed suddenly over Main street, a warning signal to the city's police force. She next rang the telephones of the three brothers, Samuel McCue, Dr. Frank McCue, and E. O. McCue, simultaneously. Immediately, she heard strained voices over the wires.

"What's wrong?" anxiously inquired the physician.

"Come over at once, Frank," pleaded the brother. "Something terrible has happened. An intruder has injured me severely and, I fear, killed Fannie."

#### Finds Scene Of Terror

DR. FRANK McCUE, a medical kit in his hand and hatless, dashed down the street to his brother's home, three blocks away. Bursting through the front door, he found his brother wandering about the lower floor of the big house in a dazed condition, clad in undershirt, trousers and house slippers. From a jagged wound on the left side of his forehead, a tiny stream of red trickled down across his face, from whence it dripped, unchecked, onto his clothes, leaving the garments hideously stained and streaked. His crimson-stained hand held a tightly wadded handkerchief, once white but now saturated with the warm red fluid from his veins.

The injured man waved his brother aside. "Don't bother with me. Go find Fannie," he ordered, pointing upstairs.

Doctor McCue dashed up the steps into Mrs. McCue's bedroom, which he found empty. Across the hall to his brother's room he sped, calling his sister-in-law as he went. Finding it also deserted, he returned to the hall, puzzled. About to enter a third room, his ears caught the sound of running water from the bathroom at the far end of the hall.

Reaching the open door, he found the narrow tiled room inside black and still—deathly still, except for the trickling water from an open faucet. Cautiously, he struck a match, entered, and lighted the gas jet on the wall. Turning, he drew back, speechless with horror.

Before him, slumped crosswise in the porcelain tub, bare legs and feet dangling over the edge nearest him, lay the twisted, mutilated form of a woman. The bloody

face had been battered beyond recognition. Torn from the head, a gory ear hung by a thin cartilage of flesh. From a gaping wound in the left breast, blood ran in tiny rivulets down across the thinly clad body, staining the silken nightgown and coloring the shallow water in the tub a pinkish hue.

Medical instinct caused Doctor McCue to grasp the wrist, still warm and flexible. But the pulse was gone. One glance at the beautiful rings on the long, slender fingers left no doubt in his mind as to the identity of the dead woman. He shuddered with the horrible realization.

Shielding his eyes from the ghastly sight with his left arm, he reached down and turned off the water, then fled from the room. Retracing his steps to the lower floor, he found his brother being tenderly cared for by seventeen-year-old Willie McCue, who had rushed home upon hearing the shocking news.

Doctor McCue had hardly finished dressing the injured man's head when Coroner Taylor arrived with Policemen Brady and Eubank. After viewing the scene in the bathroom, the coroner had the body removed to one of the guest rooms, where a more thorough examination was made. Besides the many violent blows on the head, there were ugly bruises on both arms and the right collar bone was broken. The gaping hole in the breast had been made by a discharged gun and the powder burns on the night-dress indicated it had been fired at close range.

#### Search Home

THE police officers conducted a hasty search of the home. In the dead woman's gorgeously appointed bedroom they found grim evidence of a struggle. Clothes were strewn about the floor, chairs overturned, and the snow-white bed linen was stained with big red splotches. A gory trail led from the room, down the hall to the bathroom.

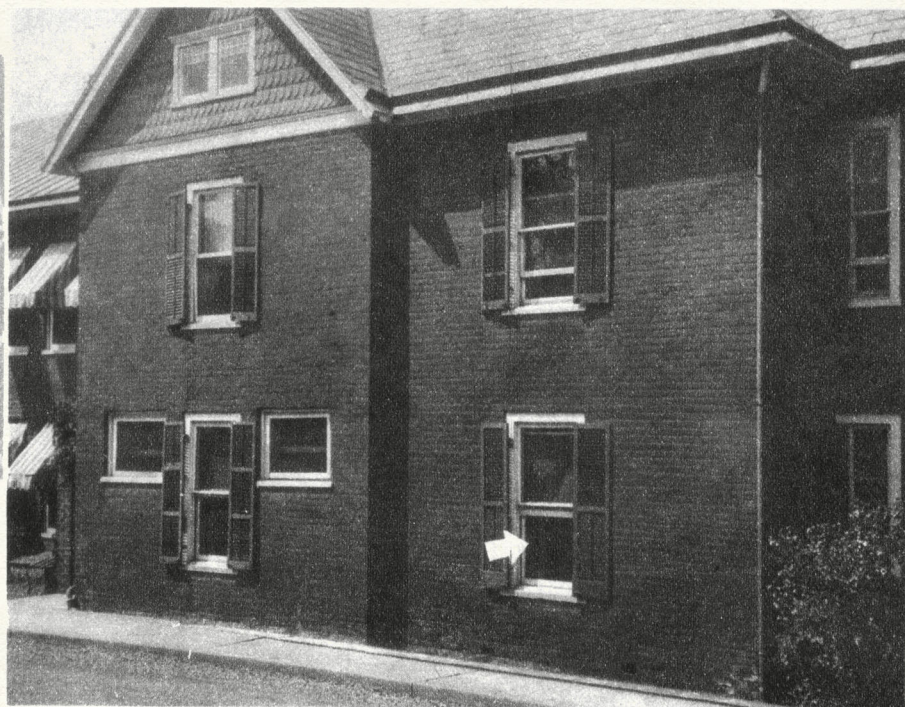
STARTLING DETECTIVE



*Faced with a seemingly hopeless murder riddle, a clever detective used the clue of an unbroken spider web to unmask a diabolical slayer and solve the mystery.*



For many years Detective W. G. Baldwin was a prominent figure in crime detection work. He died shortly after collaborating with Mr. Snell on this story.



In this side view of the McCue home, the arrow points to the window in which Detective Baldwin discovered a spider web, important clue in the case. The victim's bedroom was directly above.

The husband's room was less disordered, but crimson with blood spots.

Propped against the door jamb just outside the bathroom they found a Winchester rifle, its lone shell exploded. Near the head of the stairs, lying on the floor in a corner of the hallway, they picked up a baseball bat, its surface covered with blood.

Robbery as a motive for the atrocious crime was quickly dispelled from the investigators' minds when they found jewelry and money lying untouched in both bedrooms. And nothing was missing from the lower floor of the home. At the request of the head of the house, the officers refrained from disturbing the young daughter—twelve-year-old Ruby McCue, who had slept soundly through the night's shocking tragedy.

In a surprisingly short time Samuel McCue was sufficiently composed to give an account of the fiendish attack made on him and his wife. Said he:

"Mrs. McCue and I attended the evening services at the First Presbyterian church. We had both been away on extended visits and, upon our return from church, immediately retired to our separate rooms to prepare for bed. I had just exchanged my shoes for bedroom slippers when I happened to glance in the dresser mirror.

"A few feet from me stood a man with a club poised in the air. How he had gotten there I do not know. There was no time for questioning. I whirled, threw up my arm to ward off the descending blow, but failed. Everything went black before me. I must have remained in that helpless condition for some time. The next thing I remember was hearing the crack of a gun. It sounded as if it were in my room.

"That sudden explosion must have brought me out of my coma. I scrambled to my feet and staggered to the hall door just as the blurred figure of a man dashed past me toward the stairs. Down the steps I stumbled and fell in pursuit. As I reached the door of my daughter's room I saw the intruder climbing out of the opened window."

"Can you give us a description of your assailant?" he was asked.

The husband sat in deep thought for a moment, then said, "He was a white man—of that I am positive—a very large man and wore either overalls or a blue suit with a disreputable looking hat pulled down over his eyes. His face seems familiar but, right now, I cannot place him."

"Can you identify these?" asked Officer Brady, producing the deadly bludgeon and the gun.

"Yes," quickly responded Mr. McCue. "The rifle is mine and the bat—" appealing eyes turned in the direction of the son.

"Belongs to me," added Willie McCue. "I keep it in my room."

### Clues Lacking

THE police questioned the grief-stricken husband in an effort to establish a motive and pick up a possible clue. But the crime seemed absolutely void of either, although there was some suspicion that it might have been a grudge murder. Samuel McCue, who had served as mayor of the university city for sixteen years, must have made a few enemies. A brother, Police Judge E. O. McCue, stated that both had received recent threats.

T. F. Randolph, one of the many



friends assembled in the home, disclosed important information with this voluntary statement:

"I was sitting on my front porch tonight when I saw a man rush up to Ed McCue's house, which is directly opposite mine. I thought he possibly wanted a warrant, so I started across the street to tell him there was no one at home. When the man saw me, he scurried off in the direction of Sam McCue's house."

Other neighbors present, including T. J. Williams, the first to receive the tragic news, told of seeing a man running up the street from the McCue home. No one was able to give a clear description of the man but all agreed that he carried a cloth satchel.

The news of the appalling tragedy spread through the streets with lightning rapidity. Indignation rose to fever height as the sleepy city leaped into action. The erstwhile darkened street lights burst into sudden brilliancy, homes became illuminated, posses were formed. Officers and armed citizens combed the city and outlying districts for the brutal slayer. On through the night the search continued relentlessly.

Back in the death-ridden home, J. Samuel McCue, surrounded by his brothers and sympathetic friends, began formulating plans for the apprehension

of the fiendish assassin. One thousand posters were ordered printed and distributed throughout the state, offering a reward of \$1,000 for "the arrest and conviction of my assailant and my wife's murderer." The same notice was inserted in numerous daily papers.

"I will spend every cent I have to find the base criminal who destroyed my darling wife," exclaimed the sorrowing husband to his circle of friends. And those same friends pledged unlimited assistance.

It was late Sunday night when a long distance telephone call from Samuel McCue reached me in my home at Roanoke, Virginia, urgently requesting my services in running down the criminal.

### Interviews Husband

MONDAY morning found the normally peaceful city in turmoil and confusion. While husbands neglected their business to join in the search, wives mourned the tragic death of the popular society matron. Many remembered her as the beautiful Fannie Crawford, daughter of one of the first families of Virginia, and recalled her brilliant wedding two decades previously to the wealthy young attorney, J. Samuel McCue, likewise a socially prominent "F. F. V."

Her superb calm, her unassailable dignity and her unshaken poise had brought Fannie Crawford McCue to the peak of popularity, a recognized leader of society. At the mature age of 42, and mother of three children, she still re-

tained the beauty which had made her a belle during her earlier years.

Messages poured into the McCue home from all over the state, extending heart-felt sympathy to the bereaved family. Citizens of the stricken city quickly added the sum of \$500 to the husband's reward and Governor Montague wired an additional offer of a like amount. The city council convened in extra session and passed resolutions expressing regret and horror at the tragedy and assured Mr. McCue they would do all within their power to help detect the murderer and bring him to justice.

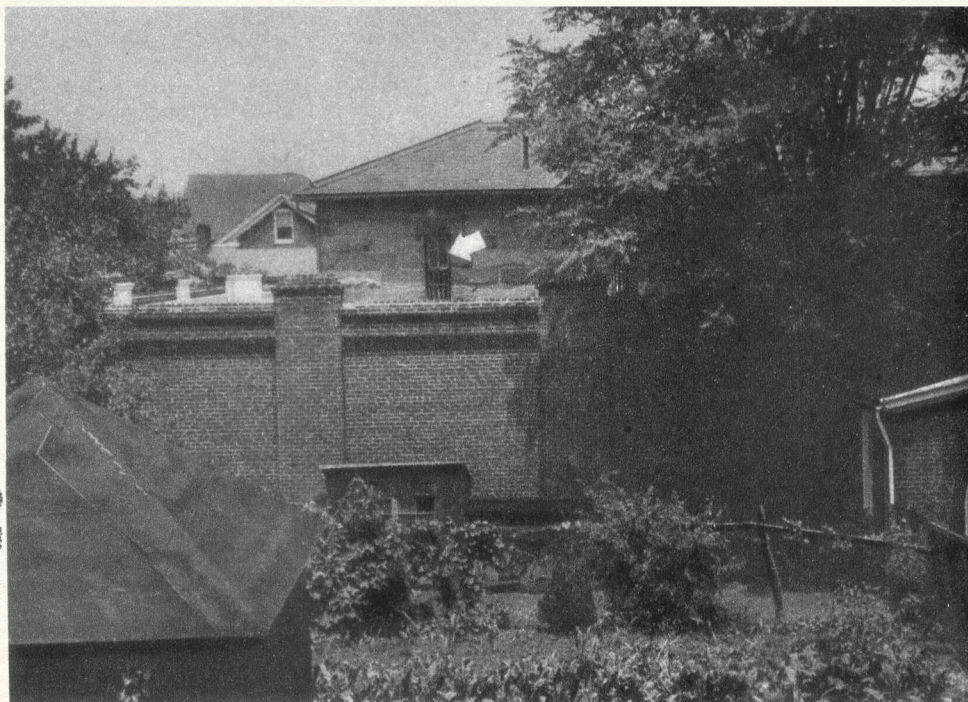
I arrived in Charlottesville at ten o'clock Monday morning and immediately proceeded to the McCue home on fashionable Park street. Alighting from the cab, I halted momentarily before the house. The well-kept lawn, the carefully trimmed shrubbery, the hedge-lined walkway, and the pleasant atmosphere of the excellent neighborhood—all of these things, together with the knowledge that the man who had sent for me was socially, politically and financially prominent, made me shudder with horror at the thought of stark tragedy, black murder, entering such a home.

Ushered into the spacious living room by a negro butler, I observed, emerging from the adjoining study, a handsome gentleman of superb physical physique, and immaculately groomed. His thick black hair and closely cropped mustache were but slightly streaked with gray. A square jaw and deeply set brown eyes immediately proclaimed frankness, sternness and respectability. A bandaged forehead bore grim evidence of what had happened.

Introducing himself as J. Samuel McCue, the man became rigid a few feet in front of me and said:

"Mr. Baldwin, an unknown murderer has wrecked my life, escaped with the life of my beloved wife. I am ready to

Sketched at left is Sergeant C. W. Rogers, who played an important rôle in the grim drama. Below is the old stone jail, behind a brick wall. Arrow points to the slayer's cell.





Smashing drama took place behind the walls of the old Albemarle county courthouse in Charlottesville when the slayer of Mrs. McCue went to trial.



pay you any price for the apprehension of the fiend who has visited this blight upon my home."

The man's plight touched me profoundly. What brute would have dared enter this peaceful home and tear it asunder with catastrophe, strike down a helpless woman, a loving mother, a faithful wife?

"Will you sit down," I requested, "and tell me all the details fully? It will be quite an ordeal, but it is the only—"

"I understand," he interrupted, dropping to the edge of a deep-cushioned settee. "I shall try to recite the story clearly and accurately."

In a calm and composed manner, he related the events of the night just as he had told them to the police. At the conclusion, I asked, "Why did you telephone the Williams home?"

Leaning back in the seat to a reclining position, he replied, sadly, "It was my wife's request that, when the time came for her to be laid out, Mrs. Williams should be the first person notified. She alone knew the clothes Fannie wished to be buried in."

"Then you knew that your wife was dead when you phoned?" I asked.

"Yes," came the faint reply. "Somehow, I just knew she was. If she hadn't been, Fannie would have rushed to my assistance. And that shot, that must

have brought me out of my stupor—it told me the worst. Alone, I was afraid to learn the truth."

The interview had lasted less than an hour. Arising from my seat, I assured Mr. McCue that every effort would be made to unravel the mystery and capture the slayer.

"You must get him," he pleaded. "Leave no stone unturned, spare no expense. My dear wife's death must be avenged."

### Summarizes Case

LEAVING the home, I took a circuitous route to police headquarters. I needed a walk to summarize and analyze the story of the brutal attack and murder, to me, a most remarkable story of a carefully executed murder, lacking in both motive and clues.

The husband had been attacked and rendered unconscious, while his wife had been brutally battered and killed. Was she the intended victim, and not he? With murder in his heart, the slayer had entered the home apparently unarmed and had found the necessary weapons for his nefarious act awaiting him. This fact pointed to someone quite familiar with the home.

Moreover, McCue, fully aware that an intruder had been in the home and had

escaped after attacking him and his wife, had not called the police, but a neighbor instead. Finally, he had made no effort to find his wife, simply taking it for granted that she was dead.

As I strolled along the street, I wondered what I would have done under the same circumstances. The most natural thing, it seemed to me—but it was useless to prescribe a definite course, for brave men do strange, often unwise, things in crucial moments when under severe strain. And the man in this instance was in a dazed condition, a fact which fully justified abnormal actions. McCue probably owed his life to that blow which had rendered him "hors de combat." Had he attempted to grapple with his assailant as his wife had . . .

I arrived at police headquarters and found that law enforcement agency agog with activity. Officers had made their first arrest in the growing mystery—a crime which had aroused the nation and was destined to rock the sovereign state of Virginia upon its venerable foundation.

Jason Maxwell, farmer, known to have had a grudge against both the former mayor and the police justice brother, and answering the description of the nocturnal intruder, was being grilled by the police. Maxwell admitted that he had

[Continued on page 64]





Above, Apache girls (masked to protect their identities) modernize the old tribal dances. Right, peaceful San Xavier mission, in the Papago Indian country, belies the sex crimes which have swept the reservation.



# Solving APACHE

**D**EEP in a great gorge in Arizona's San Carlos mountains, where the Black God of Death has often stalked in search of new victims, more than a score of Apache youths danced about a roaring mesquite fire.

The deafening boom of the huge drums crashed upon the night air, accenting the abandoned steps of the frenzied dancers. From a group of women huddled in the background rose a maddeningly monotonous chant adding a sinister overtone to the eerie scene. The ghostly swish of wooden swords echoed sibilantly in the silence between drum beats while a December wind shrilled mournfully between the steep canyon walls like an ominous portent of crimson violence.

Alice Gardner shivered and tugged her *reboso* closer about her. She was frightened tonight. Perhaps it was the ominous pounding of the drums—perhaps it was that devil-born wind which seemed now to moan, now to shriek of some awful, impending doom.

"I'm afraid," she half murmured to a young Apache woman squatting on the ground beside her. But she didn't finish the sentence. The drums drowned out her voice, sounding a message of death and massacre which hadn't been taken seriously for a half century.

The Apache Alice was in her early twenties. Even the Mother Hubbard which she wore—the dress the padres taught the Indian women to make centuries ago—couldn't conceal her slender, supple figure and the statuesqueness of her carriage when she walked. She was a brown goddess.

She stared listlessly at the line of five girls who had their arms about each other and who were now dancing back and forth before the fire and at a line of boys who would trip up to the blaze as

the girls danced back. It was the Ee-On-Tah-Kay, a dance so old that not even legend records its beginnings.

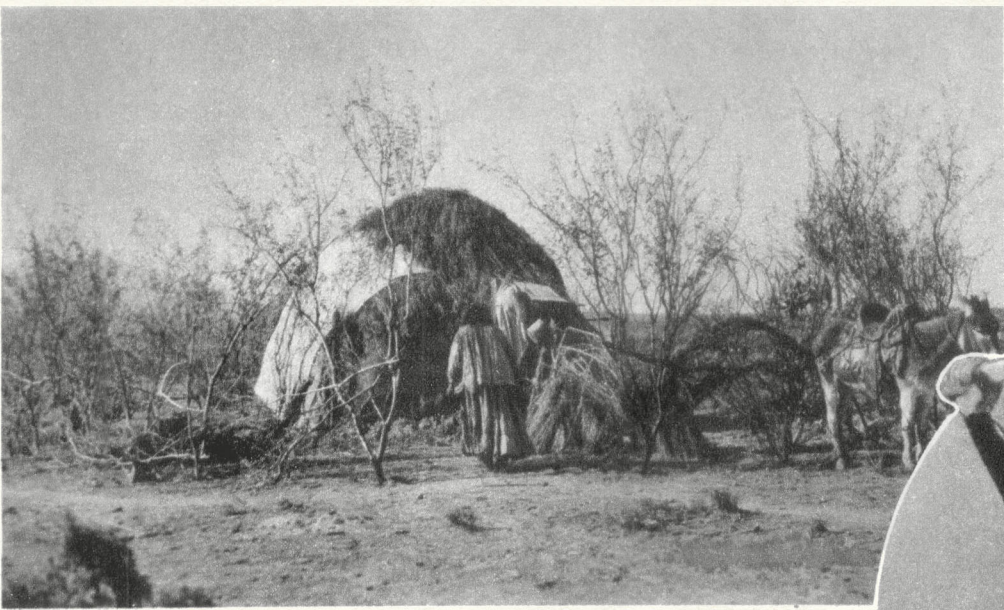
Her gaze hardened as she saw other Indians, about another circle, dancing the white man's way. The boys were holding the girls close and their cheeks were touching. She saw bottles being lifted. Boys in their teens were staggering and red-cheeked girls, also in their teens, rolled on the ground with them. Older women were brazenly kissing and petting their lovers for a night. Just as though they were white women!

Here two ages clashed. There were modest innocent maidens weaving through the Ee-On-Tah-Kay, while only a few steps away hardened girls of a bitter school of life shuffled in the voluptuous dances of the moderns.

STARTLING DETECTIVE



At left, a typical Apache wikiup in the San Carlos country, like that in which Alice Gardner and her child were hacked to death. Below, an Apache dancer at the Puberty Ritual, in which the slayer revealed before committing his crime.



*Booming drums echoed along canyon walls as frenzied Apache youths and maidens danced around a roaring fire in an orgy of passion.*

*But the Black God of Death halted their revelry when violence claimed two lives and Indian sleuths brought a killer to the gallows.*

By PAUL ARNOLD

# Arizona's LOVE CRIMES

She saw Rosita among them and her eyes dilated with hatred. Rosita, who likewise hated Alice, was a strident, painted girl who ridiculed the Mother Hubbards and aped the cursed white woman. She wore wickedly short dresses which were so tight that her pretty figure was outlined in every subtle curve.

The drums again. Pounding this time of naked braves riding mustangs and shouting like the savages they were. Riding to streak the sands with blood.

Alice heard the women near her talking. Always, it was the same. They gossiped endlessly of this girl or that who was playing mistress to this or that man, of some girl of fourteen who was living with several fellows in a hideout up in the mountains, of a child of thir-

teen who had been married to a youth of twenty, of a man who had deserted his fourth girl companion in two years and left every one with a baby on the way, of some mother who sold her daughter for a few dollars to a man in his forties, of girls who had decided to go nudist, but not just for health's sake.

"It is terrible," a stolid, wrinkle-faced squaw remarked. "It was not like this once. This is the work of the white man. These are the practices of the paleface females who call themselves women and live worse than the animals."

All this was a ghoulish nightmare to the youthful Alice. The drums. Thundering now of powder smoke and the suffering of the dying and the fiendish scalping. The wind. Still moaning. Still seeking escape from imprisoning

canyon walls. She saw her brother, Max Dia, sauntering by. She nodded but she did not smile. So was it spoken by tribal custom centuries old. No sister must ever be gay with her brother, lest an incestuous love should germinate.

A dizzy nightmare of shadows creeping everywhere, waiting for a chance to spring. Alice could stand it no longer. She found her short and swarthy husband, Earl Gardner, and said goodnight. He wanted to go with her but she told him to stay. The wikiup wasn't far. There was a rustle in the bushes. She jumped to one side of the trail. A boy and a girl were emerging from under a cottonwood. The boy saw her and ran. The girl was crying hysterically. Alice recognized her and called, "Juanita?" but the girl, stumbling, raced down the trail.





Also known as Rice, Ariz., the little community of San Carlos, above, serves as headquarters for the San Carlos Apaches. At right, a wooden Apache god, known as the God of the Puberty Ritual, a tribal ceremony celebrating a maiden's transition into womanhood.



Poor Juanita! Even she had forgotten the ways of old.

As she stooped to enter the wikiup, Alice laughed coldly. What an imaginative owl she was! She would get her year-old baby from her mother and she would be all right again. But why had she told so many she was afraid and given them another tidbit for their gossip?

Had she been psychic, Alice Gardner might have had good reason to be afraid. For out of the mad pandemonium of booming drums and shrieking winds, out of the raging emotional currents fed by feverish kisses and dances, was to come a horrible aftermath. The crunching of skulls crushed under rock . . . the gushing spurt of blood tapped with hatchets . . . a youth screaming as he fell into a death trap and his neck cracked under a tightening noose.

### The Black God Strikes

THE next morning was Sunday, December 8, 1935. It was long after sun-up when Earl Gardner wearily dragged himself to his brush hut in the scattered village of Oon-Tam on the San Carlos Apache Indian reservation. After the Ee-On-Tah-Kay, three fathers whose daughters were just coming into womanhood had staged the Puberty Ritual and it had lasted until after day-break.

Gardner's ears were still throbbing from the thundering of the drums and now a dog howling like some lost soul seemed to split his aching head. He picked up a rock and threw with deadly accuracy.

A rather handsome man of 30, with black hair and bronze skin that were the envy of many a maiden, Gardner paused a minute before brushing aside the flap

that served as a door to the wikiup. Then he quickly stepped inside.

Other Apaches nearby heard him screaming a few seconds later. They came running, found him outside the wikiup, his head buried in his hands. He was crying but with the stoicism of the Indian.

Inside they saw Alice Gardner stretched out in a pool of blood on the ground. Her child lay beside her. Even gnarled and weatherbeaten warriors who had fought in the murderous Geronimo campaigns of a half century ago flinched at the shocking sight. For the face of the brown goddess and that of her baby had been hacked past recognition.

The clever Salvador Grant arrived some time later from San Carlos. Pains-taking and well versed in the craftiness of his people, Grant is probably the greatest Apache detective of all time. He is the Charlie Chan of his tribe. As chief of police on the Apache reservation he has never failed to solve a murder mystery.

Within a few minutes he had discovered a vital clue—the death weapon. Not far from the horribly mutilated bodies—the worst butchery he had seen in his career—he found a blood-drenched hatchet. The blood had not yet congealed, indicating that Alice Gardner couldn't have been dead more than a few hours. The blood, of course, had obliterated all fingerprints.

Here were two brutal slayings which were unquestionably the work of some madman or woman. Assuming that the killer had a dominating motive for slaying the young wife, what could possibly have driven him or her so far as to murder a baby that couldn't even toddle? Only a human vampire with a lust for blood could have gone so far.

The mutilated bodies reminded Grant of another case—of that hot July in 1932 when the scholarly Henrietta Schmerler, a vivacious coed from Columbia University, had been criminally attacked and murdered while studying Apache customs. She, too, had been mutilated gruesomely. She, also, had been attending a ceremonial dance. And knowing of the passions that such dances often evoke, Grant had spent weeks in tracking down her killer. He had found that Golney Seymour, a young married man, had simply gone drunk with bestial emotions when he lured the girl into a ravine.

### Passion Crimes Increase

GRADUALLY, since that summer of 1932, crimes of lust had become more and more frequent. In the last few months of 1935 they had reached

STARTLING DETECTIVE



such a peak that Arizona authorities were mobilizing for drastic action against wild youths who were running riot in what they called "the freedom of the white man's boys and girls."

Crime was not only rampant in the Apache country, where a new passion murder was recorded clock-like every four weeks, but it was also smearing other reservations with blood. A wave of abhorrent attacks on Indian women was sweeping the Colorado reservation. There the situation became so critical that the Yuma Indian chiefs appealed to Washington for another field matron to help them control the boys and girls whose promiscuity knew no bounds.

The reports of the reservation superintendents to Washington affirmed the gravity of the situation. The Parker, Ariz., agency advised the Indian Bureau that "these tribesmen are terribly lax in their sex relations," and the Phoenix agency declared that "we have considerable immorality and it is difficult to stop."

In one month alone, November, 1935, 21 cases of criminal attacks, not including several score of offenses where the girl was equally guilty, were handled by either Arizona tribal courts or reservation superintendents!

But Grant didn't believe, after a preliminary investigation, that the slaying of Alice Gardner and her baby boy fitted

into the category of the Henrietta Schmerler case. Her body was not bruised, as if she had struggled with anyone before she was killed, and apparently she hadn't been otherwise mistreated. Death evidently took her by surprise. To all indications she had just arisen and was dressing the youngster in his best skirts, getting him ready for the mission Sunday School as was her custom, when the hatchet had fallen.

The Schmerler pattern seemingly wasn't the right one but since the majority of Apache crimes are recurrent patterns, Grant tried another mold, that of Martin Lupe.

Lupe was about the age of Gardner. His wife, too, had been slain only a few weeks before under mysterious circumstances. Like Alice she was of serious mien—not the type who might have an enraged lover. She, too, had been killed with a hatchet.

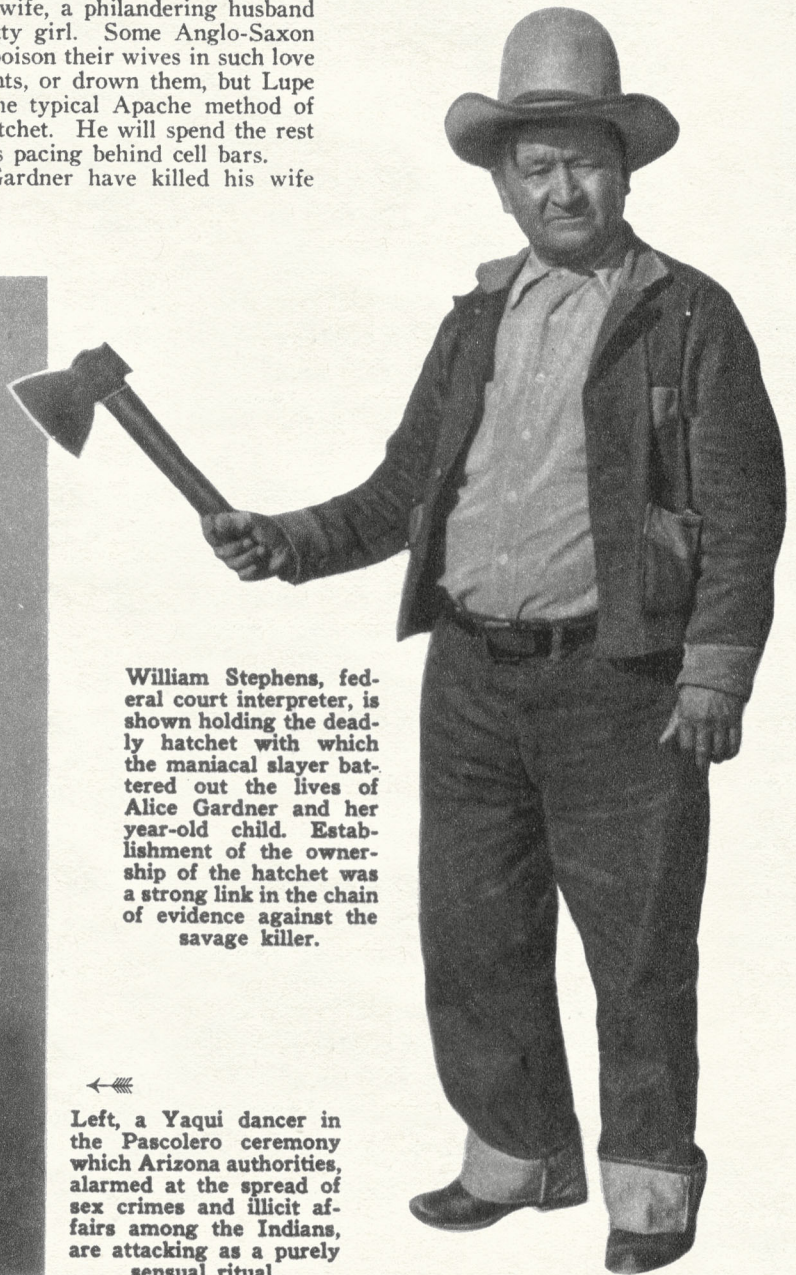
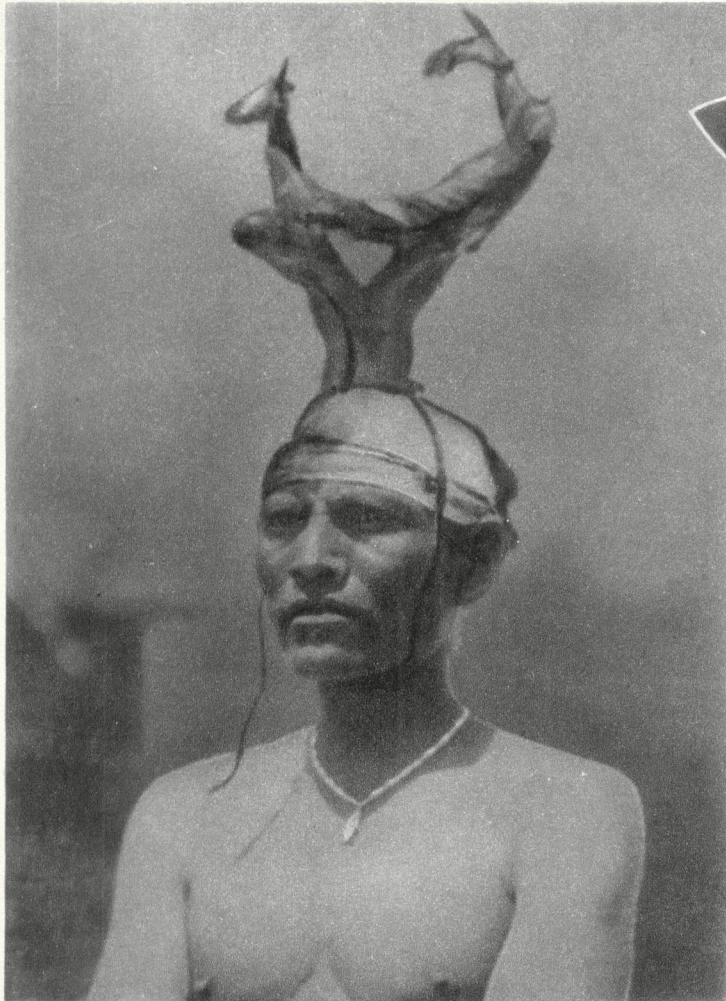
It didn't take authorities long to discover why Lizzie Lupe had been murdered. It was the old story of a conscientious wife, a philandering husband and a pretty girl. Some Anglo-Saxon husbands poison their wives in such love predicaments, or drown them, but Lupe followed the typical Apache method of using a hatchet. He will spend the rest of his days pacing behind cell bars.

Could Gardner have killed his wife and baby?

The new day—"the white man's freedom"—had brought along with it, as a necessary corollary, a disintegration of Indian ideas about marriage. Once the husband and wife took each other "until the last sun sets" but that had become archaic. Now the brave and his maiden were taking each other "maybe for one moon, maybe for two."

"Under the pretense of Indian marriage, more and more boys and girls of high school age are living together," the Arizona Indian Federation reported. "Indian marriages, which are generally recognized on the reservations, require no marriage license and divorces require no court decree."

"Under the tribal customs, this system was morally sound. The husband and wife lived together until death with few exceptions. At present the Indian marriage system permits profligate youths to carry on their promiscuous relations with full protection."



William Stephens, federal court interpreter, is shown holding the deadly hatchet with which the maniacal slayer battered out the lives of Alice Gardner and her year-old child. Establishment of the ownership of the hatchet was a strong link in the chain of evidence against the savage killer.



Left, a Yaqui dancer in the Pascolero ceremony which Arizona authorities, alarmed at the spread of sex crimes and illicit affairs among the Indians, are attacking as a purely sensual ritual.



The breakdown of the marriage tabus had resulted in other murders, such as the Martin Lupe killing, and now Apache police pondered whether "the new day" had been responsible for another debauchery in blood. Had Gardner tired of marriage and sought his freedom only to find that his young wife was too deeply imbued with the old ideas to surrender him?

### Question Victim's Husband

**P**OLICE questioned him at length but Gardner had an excellent alibi. He was able to account for every minute of his time.

"I was at the dances," he pointed out. "Lots of people saw me. I never left until they were over."

Two or three villagers testified that they had seen him come home and heard his screams of fright shortly after he entered the wickiup.

By ancient Apache custom, if the wife dies, the husband has a right to her nearest unmarried girl relative. But the Dia family—Alice's family—said that Earl had never shown any interest in the other girls of the group. He wouldn't have murdered to marry one of them, they were certain.

And could any father have hacked his own little son to death—especially a son who would grow up to take his father's place in the tribe and bring honor to his aged parent?

The Martin Lupe pattern didn't seem

to fit, but there was yet another category into which many Apache slayings fall. It might be called the Tom Chee pattern.

Some time before, Tom Chee had been found dead along a railroad track. At first his death appeared either an accident or suicide, but certain marks on his head led officers to believe that he might have been killed with a rock and "planted" on the railroad track.

For months they worked on the case while others ridiculed them for wasting their time. At last, however, they learned of a girl with whom both Tom Chee and Charles Curley were infatuated. Curley finally confessed to murdering Chee in a savage battle over the love of the young woman. He was given 40 years in which to think over that love.

Could another woman have loved Earl Gardner and killed Alice like some wild beast killing for a mate? Officers soon learned from the Apaches of Oon-Tam about the bitter feud between Alice and Rosita. They found Rosita, plied her with questions. She was boldly frank about their mutual hatred.

"Sure, I hated her," she said. "I hated the little Puritan because she thought I was wicked. She was the bunk. Thought if you didn't follow suit on the trump of some pagan forefather, you were going to the devil. But I didn't kill her. She wasn't that important. And even if I had killed her, I wouldn't have cut up the kid, would I?"

Rosita wasn't held as a suspect but she was placed under surveillance. She

was more valuable free than in a cell. Roaming about, she might lead the Indian police to something worth while.

There was Juanita, too, whom Alice had caught coming out of the brush. Alice had told her mother about the incident that night when she went for her baby. Officers thought the matter worth investigating. It was a slim lead but it was possible that Juanita or her boy friend might have killed to keep their relations a secret.

But they didn't find the wary Juanita. She hadn't been home that night. She had seemingly disappeared. Indian trackers started on her trail, picking up her footprints from the point where she left the brush. It would be a matter of only a few hours until these human bloodhounds would run her down unless she got a ride somewhere.

Could it have been either Rosita or Juanita whom Alice feared? What was it that had kept her unnerved during her last few days—that night at the dance? Not even her closest relatives knew—or



Apache women at the trial of Alice Gardner's slayer try to hide from the photographer lest they incur the wrath of the gods. Right, nine-year-old Dorothy Dia, who saw her sister slain but held her tongue, Apache-like, until police had virtually solved the case.







Caught in a web of circumstantial evidence, the man above broke down and admitted the brutal slaying of Alice Gardner and her baby. Right, Chief Tewaquaptewa of the ancient city of Oraibi who threatened his tribesmen with dire punishment if they aped the white man's way of love.



at least they weren't disclosing any secrets.

"She said merely that she was afraid of the drinking and the carousing," her friends told the police. "She said the white man had taught the Indian evil ways. She said the white man's examples were breaking up homes and destroying the girls. She said, too, she was scared of the dances."

Scared of the dances! That wasn't the first time that Arizona's fast-thinking and fast-shooting peace officers had heard that phrase.

The old tribal dances had been disappearing from Indian life for several

years. And new dances, queer admixtures of the white man's jazz steps and the more sexual elements of the ancient rituals, had been increasing.

"They are drunken orgies which end in riotous rituals in which girls prostitute themselves in the name of pagan gods whom they scorn but use as an excuse for their debaucheries," charged the Arizona Indian Federation.

Teresa L— was a product of the dances. A girl of only 16, she was recently sent to a government hospital for treatment under a federal court order.

Across the records was scrawled an accusation of murdering her 4-day-old baby.

Government attorneys charged that she was innocently drawn into the emotional whirlpool of the new sex dances. What happened to her was the story of what had happened to numerous other girls

with the exception that her case had been climaxed by murder.

### The Dance Of Destruction

**S**MALL wonder, then, that Alice Gardner had been scared of the dances. She had seen too many homes broken up, too many young girls destroyed as an aftermath of the sensual dances around the roaring fires. But authorities were still puzzled. What relation did these dance rituals have with the murder of Alice Gardner and her baby?

Before the Apache police could check carefully on the Ee-On-Tah-Kay and the other dances that Saturday night, however, a startling development took place.

It was three nights later, Tuesday night, and braves with the physique of Greek gods again were pounding the drums. The thundering roar was car-

[Continued on page 70]





← Dr. Joseph P. Moran (wearing cap) is shown with Dr. F. J. Chemelik (with glasses) caring for a prison rioter. Moran later was the official physician for the gang. What was his fate when he talked too much?

***Gang funerals—a squealer's fate—the untold story of the Bremer snatch—a gang moll takes you behind the scenes with a vicious gang of kidnap-killers.***

# "I was a KARPIS-

**B**Y THE time she was twenty-two, Edna Murray had already lived a lifetime of heartbreak and hectic experience. She had been disillusioned by the failure of an early marriage which left her a mother and a divorcee at the age of sixteen. Her next romance drew her into the underworld and a series of brushes with the law when her sweetheart, Volney Davis, proved to be a fugitive murderer. Married a second time after Davis had been nabbed and sent to jail for life, she became a widow when her supposedly respectable husband turned out to be a crook and died in the electric chair for a police shooting.

That was enough for Edna. She vowed thenceforth to go straight—never again to become involved with crime or criminals in any way. But she was swept back into the underworld when she made the mistake of marrying bootlegger Jack Murray of Kansas City. Not long after they were married a holdup victim put the finger on Jack and Edna and despite their protestations of innocence, they were sentenced to twenty-five-

year terms in the Missouri state penitentiary for robbery.

But Edna had no intention of staying in jail for a crime which she insisted she had not committed. Twice she broke jail and was recaptured but the third time she stayed free. Through the underworld grapevine she learned that Volney Davis had also escaped. They teamed up again and together sought sanctuary with the Karpis-Barker gang.

There was scant security in the connection. The mob was "hot." Some were wanted for murder and others for jail escapes. Then G-men took their trail when federal agents were slain in the bloody Kansas City station massacre.

A fugitive from justice and an associate of killers and jailbreakers, Edna Murray knew that she was irrevocably committed to the underworld. But she did not know that she was to be drawn even deeper into the criminal whirlpool. For the mob was planning its biggest coup—the \$200,000 Bremer kidnaping.

## PART THREE

**E**DWARD G. BREMER was kidnaped on the morning of January 17, 1934.

He was the president of the Commercial State Bank of St. Paul, Minn. His father, Adolph Bremer, was a close friend of President Roosevelt. Mr. Bremer had just left his 8-year-old daughter, Betty, at the Summit school, a fashionable school where the wealthy people of St. Paul send their children, and was on his way downtown to the bank in his car, driving alone.

When he reached the intersection of Lexington and Goodrich avenues, a car swung in ahead of him and another behind, bottling him up. Men with guns forced their way into his car, beat him about the head and doubled him up under the dashboard.

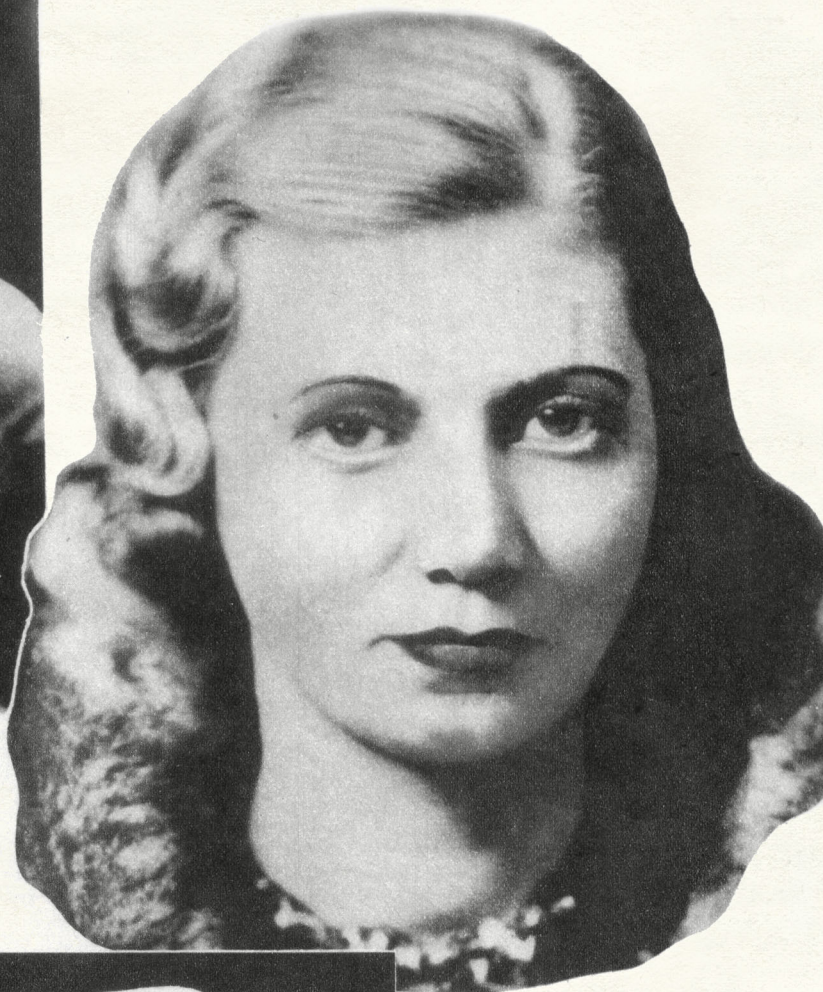
As the day wore on word began to

STARTLING DETECTIVE





The exclusive photo above and at left shows the dapper Volney Davis in a gay moment before the G-men took his trail for the Bremer kidnaping. At right, two views of Edna Murray, Volney's companion, who reveals hitherto untold details of the mob activities in this amazing story.



# BARKER Gang Moll"

spread that Edward G. Bremer was missing.

Volney Davis had not been in our apartment all that day. He came home about 5 o'clock in the evening and asked if anyone had been to the apartment. I told him nobody had and fixed him a bite to eat. Then he asked me to drive him to Bill Weaver's apartment which I did.

There we found Fred Barker, George Goetz, Paula Harmon and Wynona Burdette. I took the two girls home with me to spend the night and Volney stayed with the men. Early the next morning Volney and Fred Barker came to the apartment but Fred did not stay long.

"You'll have to leave and go to Chicago, honey," Volney told me. I did not know what had happened and I asked no questions. Volney stayed and helped pack the baggage. While we were packing Pat Riley came in and said that

Harry Sawyer wanted Volney and me to come over to his home right away.

We hurried over. "The town is hot as h—," Sawyer said.

We hurried back to our apartment and put my baggage in the car. George Goetz drove me to Chicago. What was going on I did not know but it was something big and the boys were plenty worried. Volney stayed behind in St. Paul and I got an apartment in Chicago.

The first day after I got there I read in the papers about the Bremer kidnaping. The Bremer family was one of the most influential in St. Paul and they had kept it out of the papers while they made contact with the snatch mob. The ransom demanded was \$200,000. It was one of the big cases of all time and newspapers all over the country were playing it up in big headlines. I knew then what job it was the gang had pulled.



By  
**EDNA MURRAY**

(above)

Convict No. 28973

Missouri State Penitentiary



Most daring coup pulled off by the Karpis-Barker gang was the kidnaping of Edward G. Bremer, prominent banker of St. Paul, Minn. Bremer was the victim of a daylight snatch and was held by the mobsters for \$200,000 ransom.



#### SCENE OF BREMER KIDNAPING

The photo-diagram above shows where Edward G. Bremer was kidnaped by the gang. The banker had just taken his daughter to school and was on his way downtown when he was bottled up by two cars, overpowered by the snatchers and whisked away to a hideout.

In a few days Volney Davis came in to my Chicago apartment. He seemed nervous and worried but he did not say a word about the kidnaping and neither did I. He stayed over night, left the next day and did not come back for a week. When he did return I could see he was not himself.

"Rabbit," he said—Volney and his friends all called me Rabbit—"I have done something I wish I could undo."

"I do not want to hear anything about it," I said. The less I knew the better it would be for me. But I was almost as worried as he was. Now he was wearing a bullet-proof vest, the first time I had seen one on him, and he was heavily armed.

While he was there Fred and Doc Barker came in, also George Goetz and Alvin Karpis. If you wonder how a gang acts when they have pulled a snatch like the Bremer job, I will tell you. They were nervous as cats. They knew they had overstepped their ground and so did I. They had got away with other jobs and that made them feel confident. But when they went in for kidnaping I knew it would be but a short time until all of Uncle Sam's army would be after them. They were finding that out and were worried sick.

The gang left again and a few days later I read that Mr. Bremer had been released after paying the kidnapers \$200,000 ransom.

#### Take It On The Lam

IN A couple of days Volney came home. Still I did not say a word about the kidnaping. We drove to Toledo to get Ohio license plates for our car and then went to Aurora, Ill., and rented an apartment. Volney said he wanted to get away from everyone. He did not want anybody to know where we lived, except Ma and Fred Barker who then had the \$200,000 ransom money in their possession.

Volney and I made friends in Aurora and tried to live more or less like normal people. He spent much of his time at a bookie joint making horse racing bets and seemed to be getting back to his old self again. Then the gang started coming to our apartment. Aurora is a small town and I knew we could not last having so much company. Big cars drove in at all hours of the day and night and soon the neighbors would begin to notice and the police would hear of it. I did not like it and neither did Volney.

"I'll tell them to stop coming over so much," he said. But they still came. You are not master of your own home when you belong to a mob.

Then George Goetz was killed in a gunfight in Chicago.

His wife and Ma Barker came to Aurora the next morning after Volney. Ma told Volney the heat was on and Fred had had an operation on his fingers to destroy his fingerprints.

"He's in so much pain he's out of his head," Ma said. "I want you to go back with me, Volney."

Volney went back to Chicago with them and when he returned that night

STARTLING DETECTIVE



he was furious because Ma had brought Goetz's wife to our apartment. But there was nothing we could do about it. He made daily trips into Chicago and one night he came home and said:

"Rabbit, you go over to your girl friend's and stay a couple of days. John Hamilton, one of the Dillinger mobsters, was shot in a battle at Little Bohemia and they can't find a place for him over there. They want me to bring him over here."

### Dillinger's Amazing Escape

THE papers were full of the amazing story of how the Dillinger mob had shot their way out of a trap at Little Bohemia, a summer resort in Wisconsin. Federal agents had surrounded the place. A dozen machine guns sputtered and crackled at the same time. The mob answered with their own guns and, impossible as it seems, shot their way through. They scattered in all directions, leaving behind one dead federal agent, W. Carter Baum, killed by Baby Face Nelson—the innocent looking kid I had known as "Jimmie."

At this time I had never met any of the Dillinger gang except Baby Face, so I went to my girl friend's that night. Volney drove to Chicago and brought John Hamilton, John Dillinger, Harry Campbell, Doc Barker and Homer Van Meter back with him. Doc Barker followed in his car.

The federal men did not even know they had wounded Hamilton. What happened to him afterward they did not find out for a long time, either. They spent a good deal of effort chasing a man who was already dead.

Hamilton was at our apartment two days and three nights before he died. He died at 5 o'clock in the evening and as soon as it got dark Volney Davis, John Dillinger, Harry Campbell, Doc Barker and Homer Van Meter took him out near Oswego, Ill., and dug a shallow grave and buried him. When they got back to Aurora, Volney came after me. Then it was I learned what had happened.

"Rabbit, that guy kicked," Volney said on the way back to our apartment, meaning Hamilton had died. "I hate to put you in the middle like this but it seems all I've ever done is put you in the middle. Dillinger and Van Meter are still at the apartment. So is Doc and Harry Campbell."

I never was so sick and ready to faint in my life as when I went into the apartment. I never saw such a mess. There was disinfecting powder on the bathroom floor, on my bedroom floor and on the bed but still the odor was terrible. Dirty bed linen and pillows were piled on the floor to be burned. The kitchen sink was full of dirty dishes and medicines and bandages they had gotten for Hamilton were piled on my dresser. I opened a closet door and screamed. The spade they had used to dig Hamilton's grave fell out on my feet!

That's what it means to pass out as a gangster. There can't be a more horrible

ADVENTURES

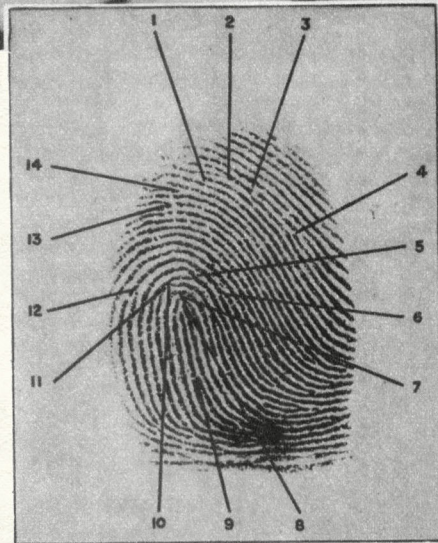


death in the world. Your one-time pals just waiting around till you kick, marking time till they can pat a spade in your face in an unmarked grave. No doctor, no comfort, nothing but dirt and filth.

I went to the kitchen and started to clean it first. Volney and Doc helped me. I worked all night trying to get things cleaned up. Volney took out the soiled linens and burned them and bought new ones.

Dillinger and Van Meter stayed close to the radio. They kept it dialed on the short waves. Every few minutes a broadcast would come through about Dillinger and the Little Bohemia battle. Baby Face Nelson was still in the woods near Little Bohemia. So was Tommy Carroll. The government men were hot in pursuit.

I was frightened and nervous. John Dillinger was the hottest man in the country and there he was in my apartment with hundreds of agents looking for him. The worst part of it was the machine guns Dillinger and Van Meter kept across their laps or lying on a chair. They both wore bullet-proof vests and were ready for action at the first sign of trouble. They stuck to the living room



One of the leaders of the mob, Doc Barker was jubilant over the success of the Bremer kidnaping; but his expression changed when G-men clapped him behind the bars and later sent him to the pen for life. Directly above is the fingerprint found on a gas can, which named Barker as one of the snatchers.



and I never went in there unless I had to.

Dillinger would look at me in a snarling, sneering way. I hated to have him watch me. He had a crooked smile and dangerous eyes and didn't have much to say. When he did say something it was all cursing and swearing. He didn't even act as if a woman was a human being and I knew if I crossed him he wouldn't hesitate a minute to shoot me down and throw me in some grave like they did his pal, Hamilton.

The day after Hamilton was buried an announcement came over the radio that Baby Face Nelson had kidnaped an old Indian by the name of Catfish and made him drive him out of the wooded section. Dillinger laughed when he heard that.

"Well, Baby Face is not hungry. He has plenty of catfish with him," he said to Van Meter.

There was bad news in the paper that night that worried us more than the presence of Dillinger and Van Meter. Boss McLaughlin had been arrested in Chicago for handling some of the ransom money! Everybody in the gang was nervous and worried, as McLaughlin knew some of the mob was living in Aurora, but he did not know the exact address.

### Machine Gun Vigil

**V**OLNEY expected Russell (Slim) Gibson over that night with good money in return for the ransom bills. Slim and McLaughlin were handling the hot money. But Slim did not show up at the expected time and everybody thought McLaughlin had sung. They expected Department of Justice men to swoop down on us any minute. No wonder the mob was worried. I did not know it, but

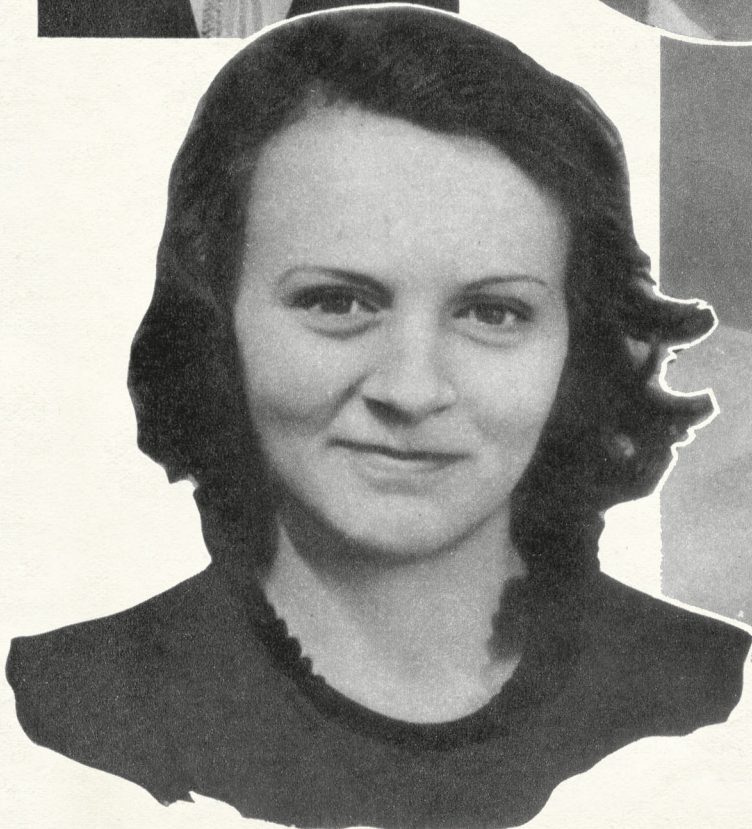
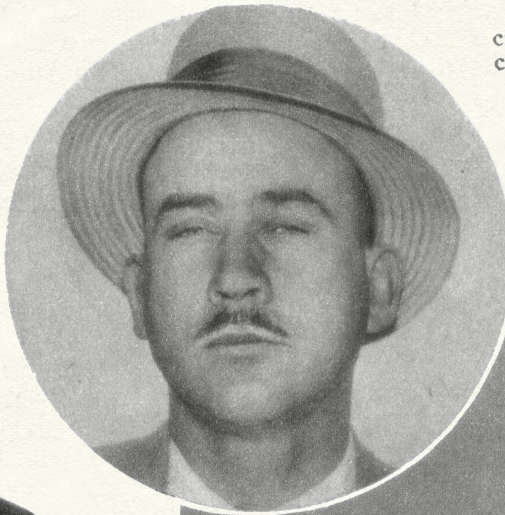
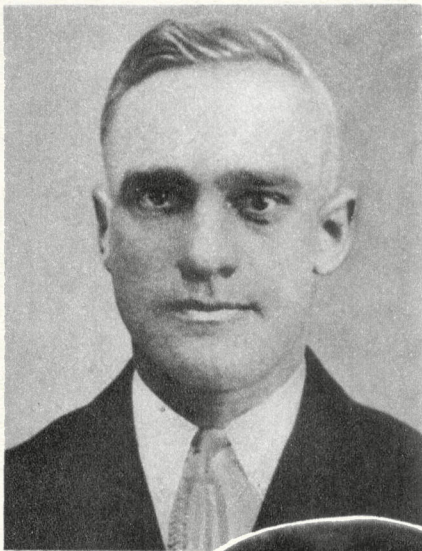
right then the rest of the ransom money was in a large grip in my clothes closet.

All the men were sitting in the living room with the lights turned out. It was a first floor apartment and we could step out the window to the street. When a mob picks an apartment for a hideout it is always on the ground floor for that reason. Usually there are several ways out.

There were three large windows in my living room. Doc Barker was sitting in one window holding a machine gun, Van Meter in a second window and Dillinger in the third. They all had machine guns. Harry Campbell was in the back bedroom watching from a window. Volney was out on the street, strolling back and forth and sometimes sitting on the porch. He was the outside lookout to make sure the government men would not have us surrounded before we knew they were there.

I was sitting in the bedroom, my heart pounding like mad, when Volney came running in.

"Doc, I think we got it!" he said excitedly. "I believe they are here! A car pulled up on Fourth street and parked



Death and jail terms climaxed the careers of this Karpis-Barker quartet. Fred Goetz (upper left) was killed in a Chicago gunfight. William Weaver (circle) went to jail for the Bremer snatch; Dolores Delaney drew a prison term for harboring, and Slim Gibson (above), shown with an official, died in a G-man raid.



and two men got out and walked up the street. There's another car on Fox street—three men got out of that!"

He ran to the clothes closet, jerked out the large grip and put it in the middle of the living room floor.

"Rabbit, you get out of here—go get in my car!" he ordered. "Let's all get ready!"

Doc Barker saw Volney was going to pieces. Doc said sharply to me, "Rabbit, you stay right where you are. You don't leave this apartment. If fireworks start, you get behind me and this Tommy and I will take you out of here."

Volney got control of himself. "Well, honey, maybe you better stay here," he agreed. "If we have to shoot our way

Pretty Wynona Burdette was the sweetheart of Harry Campbell and a general good fellow when the mob got together for a party. But there was no love lost between them when Wynona took the stand in federal court and told what she knew about the mob operations.



One of the first of the gang to fall into the hands of the law, Boss McLaughlin was picked up in Chicago as he attempted to change ransom bills.

out, Rabbit, you grab that bag sitting there and try to get to one of the cars with it."

It was the most terrible moment I ever lived through. I felt I was going to be killed in the next few minutes. I knew I was in a hornet's nest. When Doc Barker told me to stay where I was he meant what he said. One false move and I would be put out of the way.

Doc snarled something and lifted his Tommy quick as lightning, ready to pour slugs through the window. He had seen two fellows cross the street and light a cigaret. He thought it was a signal for the government men to rush the house.

"Don't do that, Doc!" Dillinger yelled. "Wait till we're sure we're right—then we'll give it to 'em!"

Doc lowered his gun. The room was so quiet I could hear myself breathe. Everybody was armed to the teeth with machine guns and forty-fives. Campbell had a high-powered rifle. Homer Van Meter was the coolest of them all. He laughed and wisecracked. But a few months later, after he went back to St. Paul, he wasn't laughing. The local cops caught up with him and filled him with slugs when he tried to run.

After a while a car pulled up in front of the apartment. It was Slim Gibson and Jimmie Wilson. They knocked at

the door and Doc jerked it open. They turned pale when they saw all the machine guns pointing at them and everybody sitting there with their fingers on the trigger.

Slim told the mob they had got jittery and lost their nerve without any reason. Everything was all right but we had better get out of town as soon as we could. Who the men were that had driven up the street and scared the mob so, we never learned, but they never knew how close they came to being shot to pieces.

Dillinger and Van Meter did not have a car so we had to get them one. The next night—it was Saturday—Volney and I drove into Chicago in Doc Barker's Buick and Volney bought a stolen Ford from some boys who made car stealing a business. He drove the Ford back to Aurora and I followed in the Buick.

The next day about 1 o'clock Dillinger and Van Meter walked out of our apartment. I was glad to see them go. They carried two machine guns wrapped in a blanket. They had no baggage. That



had been left behind in Little Bohemia. I never saw them again. I have already told how Homer Van Meter was killed in St. Paul, and everybody knows how Melvin Purvis and his Chicago G-men shot Dillinger down as he was leaving a theater. I cannot say that I was sorry. Dillinger was one of the most coldblooded persons I have ever known.

The afternoon they left Volney, Doc Barker and Harry Campbell went to Toledo and I took an airplane to Tulsa to leave some money with Volney's sister for his folks. The heat was being turned on for the Bremer job and the one thought of the mob was to do everything they could to cover up.

When I got back and joined Volney at Harry Campbell's house in Toledo, I found that Volney and Doc Barker had been operated on by Dr. Joseph P. Moran. They took a desperate chance, hoping they could disguise themselves. They both had a face-lifting operation and also had their fingers sliced raw to destroy their fingerprints. They were both all bandaged up and in terrible pain.

"You should have your fingers operated on, too," they told me.

### Fingerprint Operations

I TOLD them no—absolutely no. I would not hear of such an operation. I had no faith in it and told Volney he was spending his money for nothing. Even if the operation would do any good, I did not have confidence in Dr. Moran. He stayed drunk most of the time and to my mind was no better than a butcher. Volney said Dr. Moran was drunk when he operated on him.

Doc Barker moved in with us when Volney and I got an apartment in Toledo the next day. Jimmie Wilson, a medical student, was supposed to come out to the apartment every day and dress their hands and faces but sometimes he would not show up for days at a time. Then I would have to dress their hands and change the bandages on their faces.

I even had to feed them. They were absolutely helpless and could not use their hands at all. When I changed their bandages I would get sick. Their fingers were like raw meat. All of this suffering did not do them a bit of good. It takes more than slicing the flesh off your fingers to fool the Department of Justice.

I never left the apartment except to buy groceries, except for a couple of occasions when I took Volney and Doc out for a ride after dark. When the time came to remove the bandages from their faces we would go out to a club where most of the gang held out. Fred Barker and Alvin Karpis, who had their operations a month before Volney and Doc, were doing a lot of drinking there.

When Karpis was captured not long ago, I read that J. Edgar Hoover said he had had his face lifted and the lobe of his ears cut but he still looked just like his photographs. That was what I always told them, that these operations didn't do any good.

I had to go back to Aurora under a



### HAMILTON'S GRAVE

Photo above shows G-men removing the body of John Hamilton (right) from the shallow grave where pals had buried him. The inside story of his death is told here for the first time.

doctor's care. After I had been there a couple of weeks Volney and James Wilson drove down after me. Volney told me he had moved our baggage from the Toledo apartment to a cottage Myrtle Eaton and Bill Weaver had taken on Lake Erie near Sandusky, Ohio. We lived with them for a while and would often drive out to the club where the gang made their headquarters.

### Doc Moran's Fate

ON ONE of these trips to the club we found Fred Barker, Russell Gibson and Dr. Moran drinking there. Volney stayed for a while, then said he was leaving for a couple of hours. He told me to wait until he got back. What happened after he left goes to prove there is no such thing as friendship in gangland and that mobsters will strike at each other as quick as rattlesnakes when they get angry.

I was sitting at a table with Fred, Gibson, and Moran. They were arguing. Dr. Moran was mad because Weaver would not have his fingers operated on.

"You told me Weaver would have his fingers operated on and I am ready to do the work," Dr. Moran yelled. "I need the money."

Fred Barker said, "You have done a rotten job on all our hands and you stay drunk and do too much talking."

That made Moran see red.

"What are you doing—bawling me out?" he snarled. "Don't be bawling me out—I've got you all in the palm of my hand!"

Gibson spoke up and tried to quiet him. "You're drunk, doctor. Come on, let's go for a boat ride. You'll feel better."

Gibson then turned and winked at me. I knew what that wink meant. Dr. Moran



was going for a ride, all right—a one-way ride.

The gang were using a fast motorboat that belonged to somebody they knew in Toledo. Moran was too drunk to know he was in any danger. Too drunk to remember the men he threatened were dangerous killers. Fred Barker and Gibson and Dr. Moran all drove off in Gibson's coupe. In a couple of hours they came back to the club—without Dr. Moran. They did not say anything and neither did I. But I knew well enough that Moran would never tell the police about the operations he performed on the gang.

In a short while Volney came back and had a few drinks with Fred and Gibson. Then we drove back to the cottage. On the way Volney asked, "Rabbit, what happened to Dr. Moran?"

"I don't know," I said. "Why?"

STARTLING DETECTIVE



"Oh, nothing," he answered. But the look he gave me made me feel queer. I had seen how quick a killer you thought was your friend could turn on you. I was not so sure Volney was just trying to find out what I would say but if that was his motive he got fooled. What I saw at that table and what I heard I was more than ready to forget. I knew Dr. Moran had talked out of turn to Fred Barker and Fred had sealed his lips forever.

Volney was not getting along well with the boys. When a gang is pulling a job they all stick together but when it comes to making the cut they often start fighting among themselves. Volney and I

began quarreling. He was staying away from home a lot and I did not like it.

Fred Barker was out at the cottage one night when Volney had been gone for a couple of days.

"Rabbit, what's wrong with Curly?" Fred asked. "Is he blowing his top?"

I said, "I don't know, Fred. What do you mean?"

"Well, he is running around with some skirt and I think he is in love."

"Oh, well, let him have his fun," I said. "I don't care."

I guess Fred Barker thought I would open up and talk about Volney. He was probably trying to pump me to see what I would say as there was bad feeling between him and Volney. But I just kept quiet.

Fred was living in Cleveland and he asked me if I wanted to go up and spend a few days with him and Paula, his girl friend, as Curly was leaving me alone. Of course, Myrtle and Bill were there, but I did feel hurt the way Volney was acting. So I went with Fred to Cleveland. On our way he got to talking about the fingerprint operation and what a rotten job it was.

"Rabbit," he said, "you were smart you did not go in for that operation."

"I did not have any faith in it," I said. "Volney talks like he is going to have Moran operate some more on his face, as he is not satisfied with the way Moran cut his ears."

After shooting his way through a police cordon at Little Bohemia, John Dillinger hid out with Edna Murray and Volney Davis. Below, Dillinger's getaway car, showing hole made by posseman's bullet and bloodstains when Hamilton was wounded.

Of course, I knew Moran was dead but I did not want Fred Barker to think I knew he was dead, which was my reason for saying what I did.

Fred laughed. "If he ever operates on anyone else it will be on the fish in Lake Erie."

"Well, I think Volney is foolish if he does have another operation, as he is scarred up bad enough now," I said. Then I changed the conversation. If Fred thought I knew too much about Moran, I would be taking a one-way ride myself.

I stayed a few days with Fred and Paula. They brought me back to the lake cottage and Fred went to Chicago to spend a few days with Ma Barker. While we were living with Myrtle and Weaver in the lake cottage all the gang were making the place a spot to come and drink and have a good time. Alvin Karpis and Dolores Delaney would come down from Cleveland and others were Fred and Paula, Willie Harrison, Doc Barker, Gladys and Harry Sawyer.

Weaver did not like a gang of people around and he told them he and Myrtle moved to the lake to get away by themselves and he did not want Myrtle cooking every day for a crowd of people. Volney thought if we got a cottage by ourselves we would not be quarreling so much, so we moved out to a cottage on Sunnyside Beach about fifteen miles from Weaver's.

### Quarrel Over Ransom

ONE Sunday Volney and I drove down to Weaver's cottage. I knew that trouble was in the air. The Bremer ransom money had not been split and Volney began to think he was not getting a square deal. He was getting tired waiting for his money. At the cottage he and Fred Barker had a bitter argument about the ransom split.

"I'm tired waiting for my dough," Volney said to Fred. "I want my cut and I want it *now*."

Fred got so mad his face turned purple. He had a gun and Volney did not and for a minute I thought he was going to let Volney have it. He was so furious he would probably have done just that if there hadn't been so many others around. Volney never liked Fred though he did like Doc Barker. Fred considered himself the brains of the gang and he never failed to let them know it. Volney was the only one who ever called his bluff.

"You can bulldoze the rest of them but you can't bulldoze me," Volney cried. "I know you have a pistol in your pocket and you know I have nothing but my bare fists, but I am through with you and would not make another dime with you!"

"You will not make a dime with anyone else," Fred sneered. "You know I have powerful connections all over the country."

Volney knew Fred was speaking the truth. He did have powerful connections. They argued and cursed and swore but there was no shooting then, for which I was thankful. Things were patched up a little but Volney was mad clean through

[Continued on page 68]





# Texas' Illicit HANGING



Mrs. Della McBee, above, wife of H. L. McBee, shown in circle, reported her husband missing to the sheriff's office at the time of his disappearance. After an investigation it was concluded that McBee had "just walked off and left it all."



**S**WAYING in a grim death dance, as though moved by the hands of a satanic puppet master, the hideous thing that had been a man dangled from the limb of a tree set deep in the sheltered confines of a dense thicket.

As the cold December wind swept across the rolling West Texas countryside, the bleached frame, clothed only in the barest shreds of apparel that long since had succumbed to the elements, seemed to take life from the breeze, appeared to jump and turn and pirouette in fiendish fashion as though filled with a sinister determination to live again.

For months that fleshless spectacle had hung suspended by the neck in this shaded retreat, secure from human eyes. True, it once had been a living, breathing man. But ravenous birds of prey had stripped the flesh, the sinews, from the body, leaving only this white frame, with its suggestion of tattered clothing, flapping and dancing in the chill breeze of winter.

This, then, was the shocking scene which burst upon the startled vision of two Rising Star boys on that memorable day—December 22, 1934. And it was to set officials of Eastland county on a tortuous trail of mystery and intrigue and crimson violence that has had no parallel in criminal annals of the Lone Star state.

The boys, Dean Broughton and Herman Boyman, their thoughts on Christmas and the elusive rabbit that was the immediate object of their pursuit, skirted the little Rising Star graveyard and

*Bleached bones of a dangling skeleton, swaying in the winter breeze, started one of the most sensational death mysteries in the history of the Lone Star state.*

*Here is the dramatic official story of an amazing investigation.*

plunged into the underbrush on the trail of the rabbit. Deep into the thicket they followed the speeding animal.

Suddenly they stopped short in their tracks, all thought of the bunny vanishing from their minds. Their feet rooted to the spot, their breath almost snatched from their bodies, they looked with widening eyes at the grisly spectacle that danced above them in the branches. A vagrant gust of wind moved the whitened specter, shifted the leering skull as though the ghostly thing were giving them a grim inspection. The long legs and arms rattled and clanked in a macabre dance.

With twin gulps the youthful rabbit hunters caught their breath, turned their backs on the scene of horror and raced from the thicket. Past the cemetery, which now seemed to have a more sinister meaning, they dashed. And they did not stop until they had reached Dean's home where they poured out their amazing story to the boy's father, O. C. Broughton, a farmer. Broughton immediately communicated with City Marshal A. D. Carroll of Rising Star. He, in turn, summoned Justice of the Peace Morris, since deceased, and together the officers sped to the scene. The word was passed to Sheriff Virge Foster and to me.

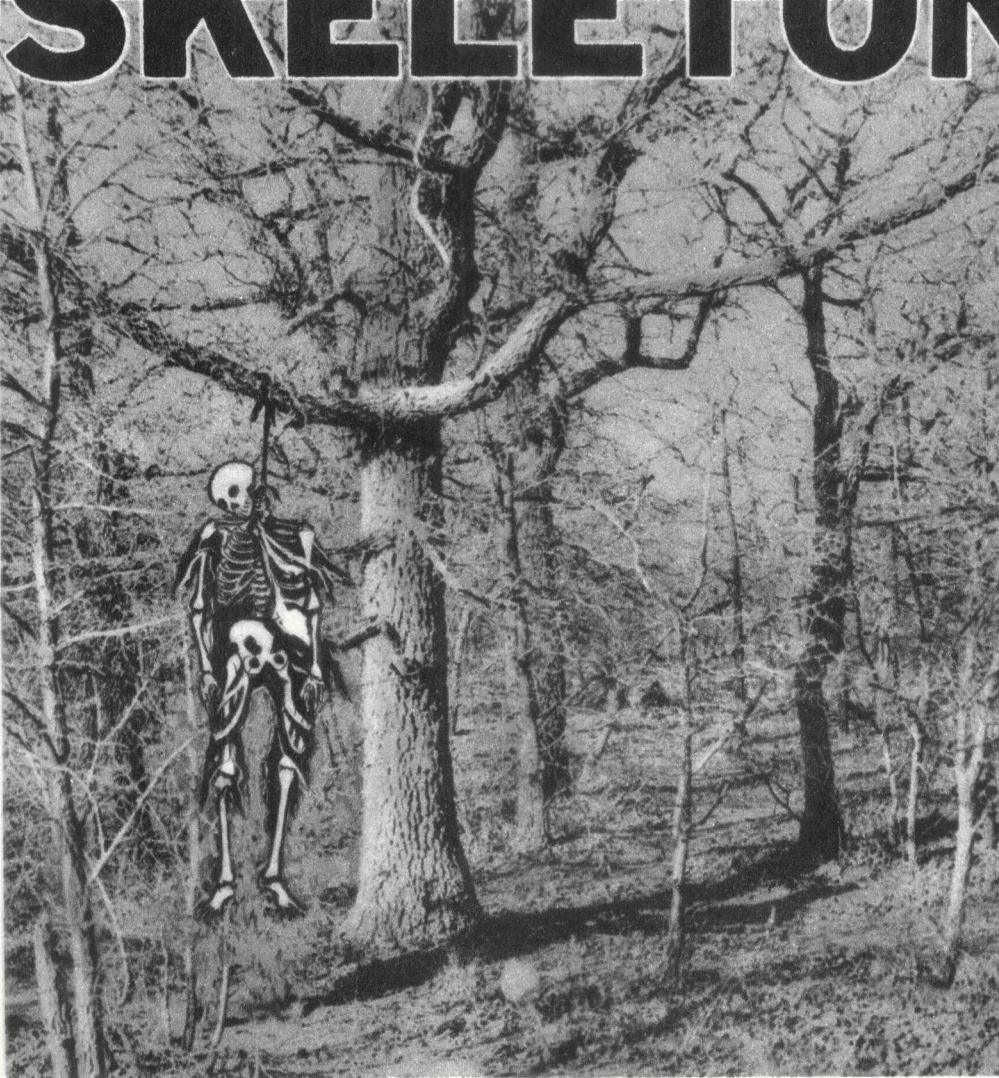
## Confirm First Report

**I** WAS sitting in my office in the Eastland county courthouse on that afternoon of December 22 when Sheriff Foster, a veteran peace officer, notified me of the amazing find. Needless to say, I was startled. Although this West Texas country, more than 100 miles west

STARTLING DETECTIVE



# Lovers and the SKELETON



District Attorney Grady Owen (right), notified that two boys had found a skeleton hanging from a tree, as indicated in the photo-diagram above, leaped into the case.



of Fort Worth, has had its share of brutal crimes and strange deaths, the very grotesqueness of a skeleton hanging in a tree upset me for a moment.

Investigation revealed that Carroll and Morris had confirmed the boys' first breathless report. The bleached framework of a human being was suspended from a limb with a thick, black wire about its neck. The skeleton was battered, weather-beaten. It was only partly clothed in fabric that had been rotted by the elements. Trousers that once had covered the now whitened bones had dropped to the ground and were rotting away.

"The skeleton was hanging from a limb some eight feet from the ground," Marshall Carroll reported. "It blew

about in the wind. The pants had been blown off. It was horrible."

That was the beginning of a mystery that required two years to solve—two years of blind alleys, of conflicting statements. Two years of heartbreak for a family whose members were insistent that justice be done. It was two years of steady pounding at something that was almost intangible, nameless.

It was apparent from the first that we either had an ordinary suicide or a baffling murder mystery on our hands. If it were a suicide we would have the identity of the victim established within a few days, if it could be established at all. If it were suicide a check of missing Eastland county persons would soon bring out some sort of information. If

*By*  
**District Attorney**  
**GRADY OWEN**  
*of Eastland County, Texas*  
As Told To  
**CRAFT CAMPBELL**



it were murder—well, almost anything could happen.

We wasted no time in starting our investigation. Officers rushed to the eerie death scene just a few yards from the cemetery. We wanted every scrap of information we could get—footprints, bits of hair, the wire by which the skeleton was held in place, everything. We needed identification of that skeleton first, and then the facts of how it got there.

News of the strange case spread rapidly. Before night hundreds of persons had visited the scene and speculated on the identity of the victim. By morning the metropolitan newspapers had named our mystery for us. It was "The Hanging Skeleton Case."

In such cases the first public reaction is to adopt a theory of suicide and let it go at that. Fortunately, peace officers refuse to rely on such snap judgment.

### Inspect Death Scene

**WE TURNED** our immediate attention to the little clump of trees and the stubby underbrush. I stood on the outside of the little thicket and peered into its depths. Yes, a man's body could hang there for a long time without being noticed. In the summer with heavy foliage it would be impossible to detect it from the outside. In the winter, the view was better but the gray and brown limbs were thick.

I joined the officers beneath the tree. We turned our attention to the clothes, rotten, to be sure, but worth checking. We guarded the remnants carefully. Late in the afternoon of that same day, Mr. Broughton unearthed a torn piece of quilt. It had been placed beneath a bush and crudely covered with leaves and sticks. But aside from being weather-worn, it had no marks on it.

Then officers made an important dis-

covery. In the pocket of the shirt which flapped around the fleshless bones was a little round tag-pin. It was black, about the size of a silver dollar. The weather had cracked the once-white celluloid. A number, 8769, was visible, but wording at the bottom of the disc was not legible. We felt the pin was to be our chief clue in establishing a definite identification.

The skeleton was cut down, the thick wire removed from the neck, the remnants of clothing carefully folded, and the grisly remains were taken to an undertaking establishment.

We began checking at once on the tag. Our efforts revealed that it was of a type used by the state highway department to identify employes and check them against the payrolls. We knew then that identification was simply a matter of wiring the state office at Austin and finding out to whom this tag had been issued.

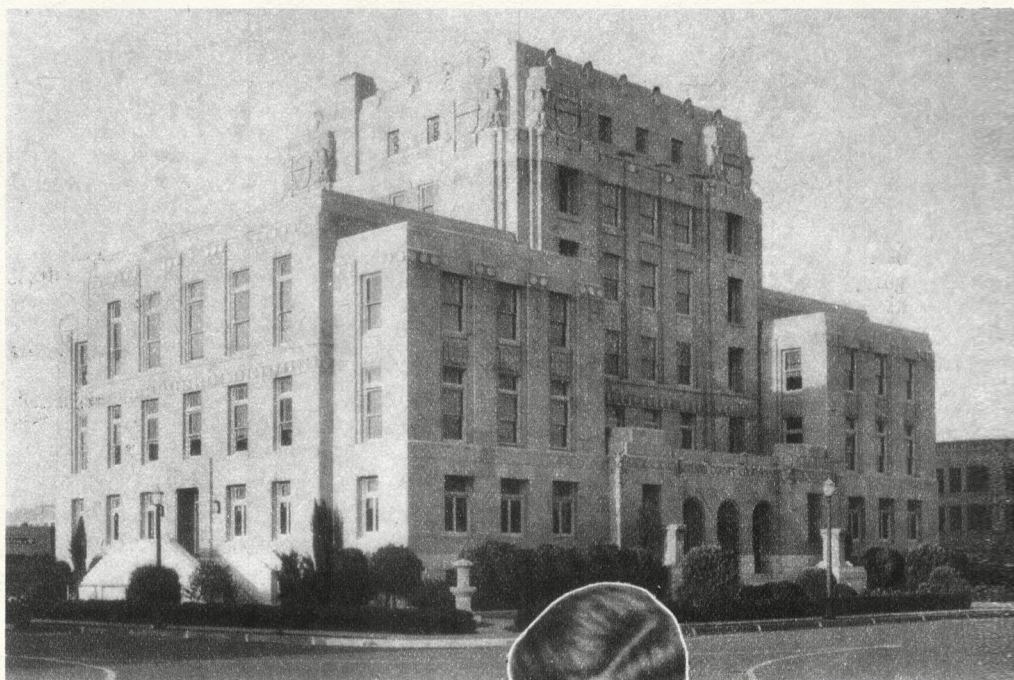
Then the thought struck us all at the

same time. What if the number belonged to someone still living?

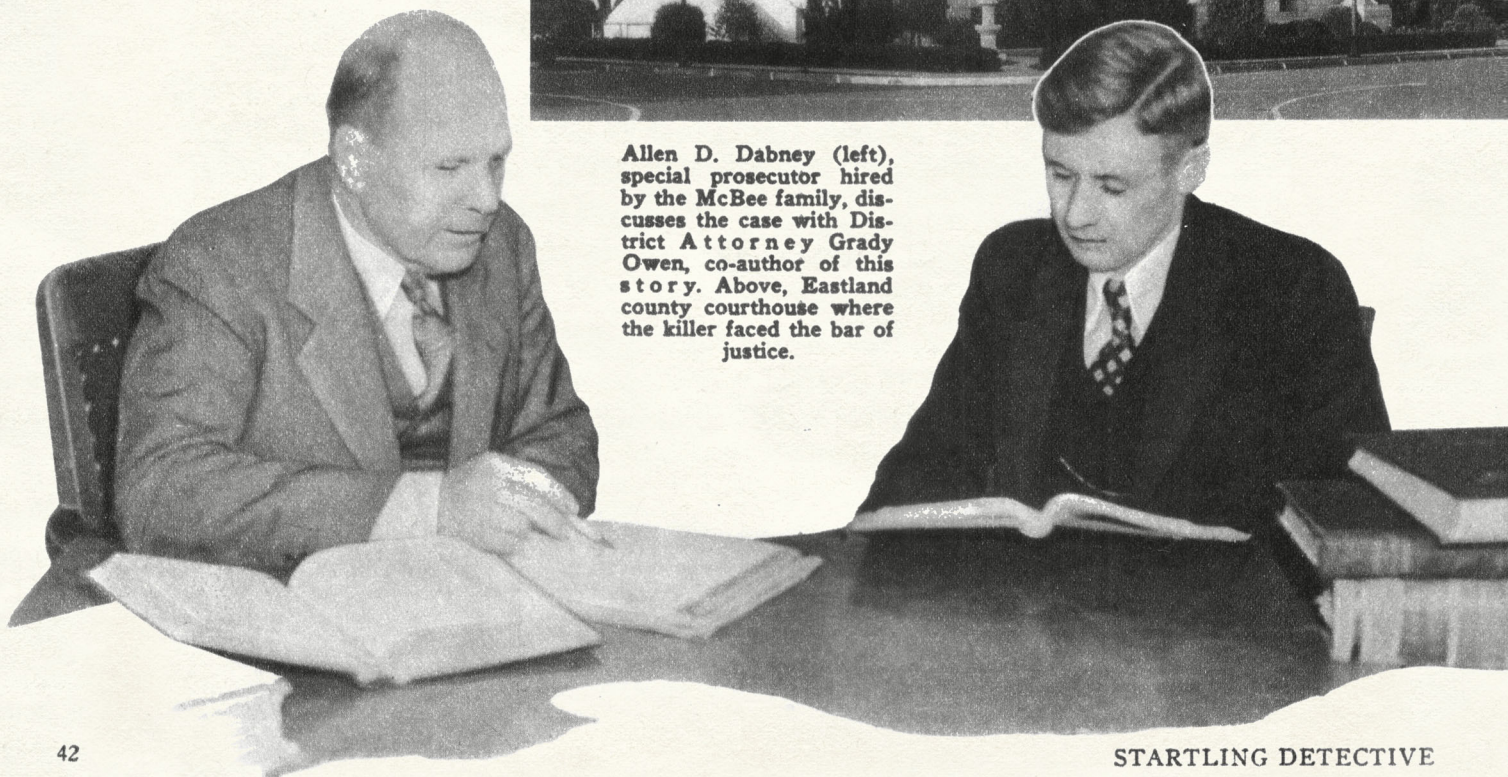
But we were rewarded. Soon a telegram came from the state department informing Sheriff Foster that the tag had been issued to one H. L. McBee, a 40-year-old highway worker who had been employed by the state department at Rising Star. The office also added that the last check had been issued to McBee in April, 1933, and that he had not resigned or been discharged but, apparently, had just left his job without notifying anybody.

### Quiz McBee Family

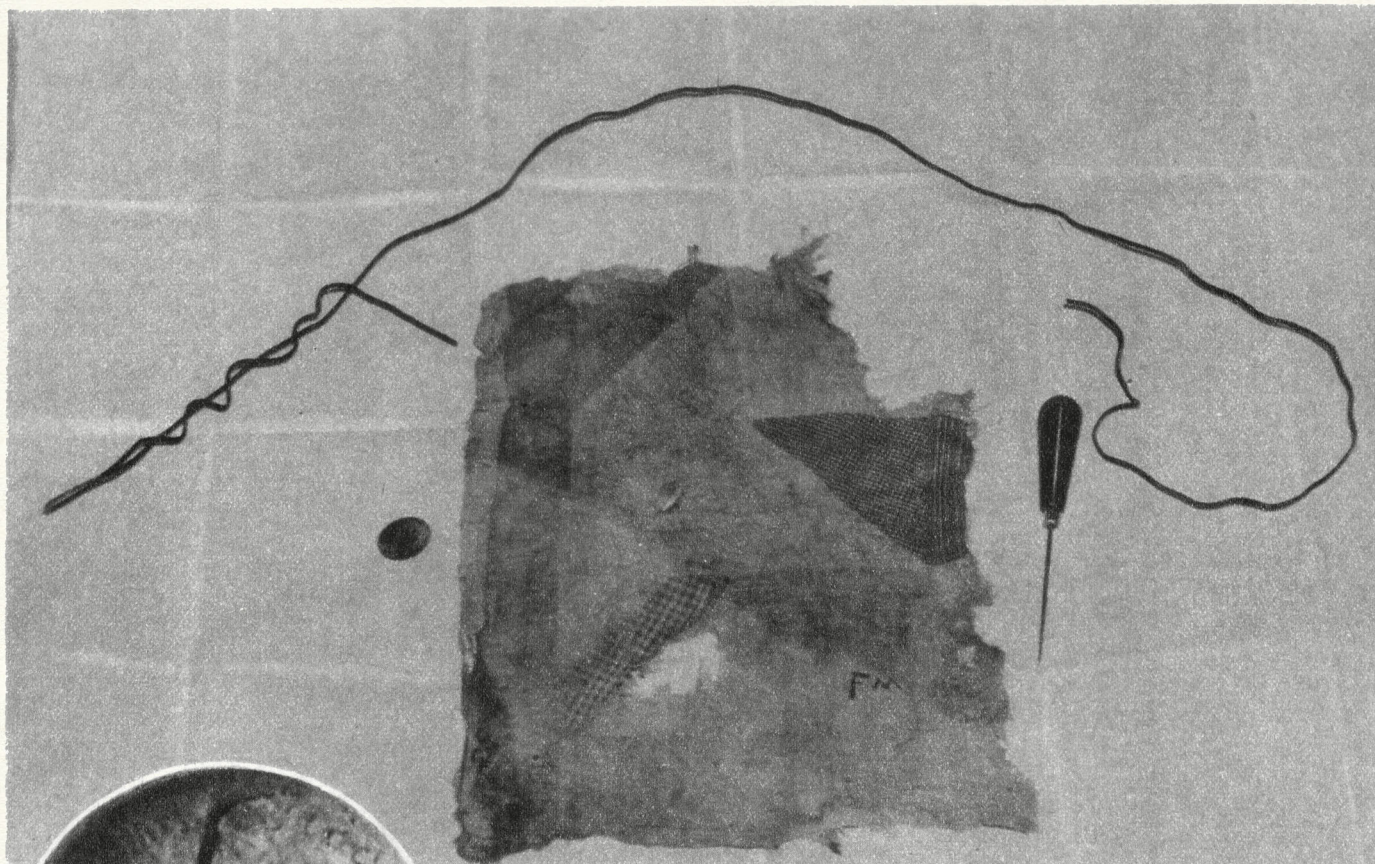
**SHERIFF FOSTER'S** office contained a missing person notation regarding McBee. We turned to it, and called in McBee's family. He had a wife and two children living at Rising Star, an aged mother and father, and several brothers and sisters. All corroborated the high-



Allen D. Dabney (left), special prosecutor hired by the McBee family, discusses the case with District Attorney Grady Owen, co-author of this story. Above, Eastland county courthouse where the killer faced the bar of justice.







The chief evidence in the case as presented in court—wire used to hang the body, torn piece of quilt found near the gallows tree, an ice pick, and the highway tag, also shown in close-up at left, by which the body was identified.

way department statement that nothing had been heard from McBee since May 1, 1933. The missing person notation revealed that the highway worker had disappeared on that date.

The wife, believing her husband dead or gone forever, had remarried. She had become the wife of Raymond Henry, 25, operator of an ice truck in the Rising Star rural vicinity. The family identified the bits of clothing as having been worn by McBee at the time of his disappearance. The worker's tag was his, they said. We had a dentist check the teeth. He had done some work on McBee's mouth and immediately identified various fillings.

McBee's aged father and mother, farmers living near Eastland, brought his remains back to the old family graveyard for burial.

The identification had been made. There remained the task, however, of settling one thing in our own minds—was it suicide or was it murder?

We found, as the checking continued, that a few days after McBee's disappearance, his wife, Della McBee, had

sent her young son to town to inquire if anyone had seen his father. When the boy returned without gaining any knowledge, she reported her husband missing to Rising Star officers and later to the sheriff's office. She said that McBee had walked out of the house after signing some highway papers, and had not returned.

Apparently he was not seen again, until his skeleton was found.

### Reveal Domestic Trouble

OUR investigation revealed a few things that bolstered the suicide theory. It was rather generally known in the little town that "Old Man McBee," as his neighbors and friends called him, was not happy. His wife and her friends liked to dance and have a good time, but McBee, although often joining in these activities, did not approve of them. He and Della were the parents of a boy and a girl, and McBee, who came from a staunch West Texas family, wanted to provide a clean home for them.

Then, too, McBee had talked of suicide. At Rising Star it was definitely believed that Old Man McBee finally had carried out his threat.

Officers recalled that at the time of McBee's reported disappearance in 1933, they had visited Rising Star and had

asked a few questions here and there. They found the general opinion was that McBee had finally "just walked off and left it all."

G. L. McBee, the father, and a brother, Clyde, an oil well driller, are two of the finest men I have ever known. For years they had watched H. L. struggle with his family affairs, fighting off things that threatened to rip his home from its foundation and fling it to the winds. They did not want to interfere, but they watched and worried and suffered with him. Did he finally just give up the struggle? They wondered. Men have done so for less.

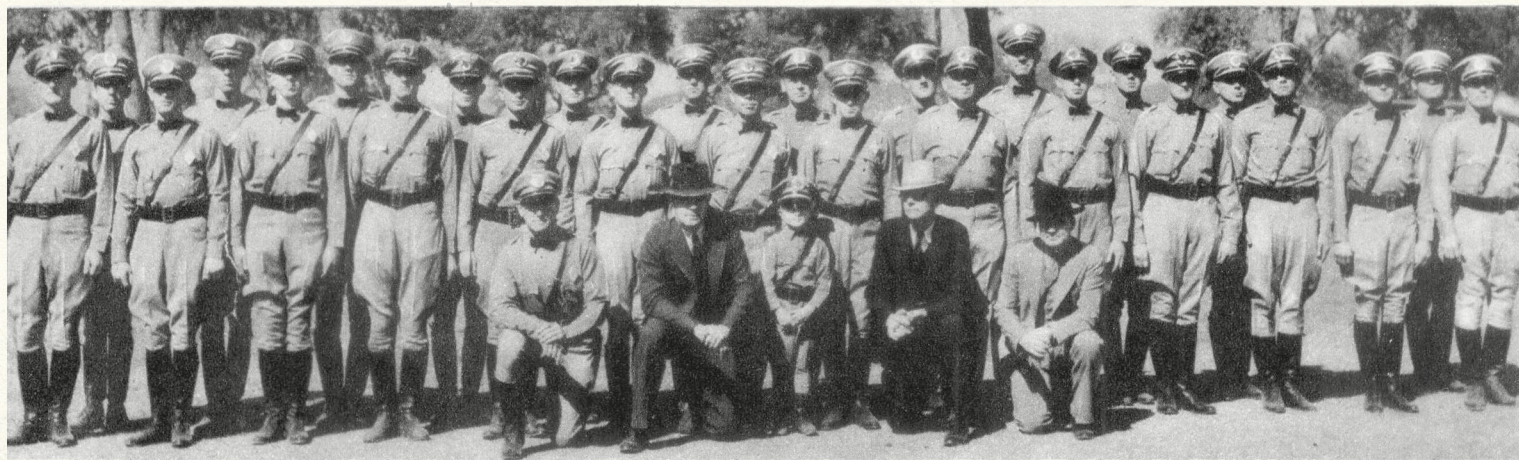
When McBee disappeared, the father and brother immediately had fears of foul play. They knew that in the vicinity of Rising Star there existed a hard-drinking, hard-fighting element that would stop at nothing. They knew, too, that some of these persons had invaded H. L. McBee's home.

They refused to believe that McBee had "just wandered off." But from May 1, 1933, until December 22, 1934, was a long time. No word came from the missing man. The officers had nothing on which to work and they, too, had believed that Old Man McBee had chucked it all and either committed suicide or had gone to gayer climes.

But the father and the brother had held their ground. They did not believe H. L. would do that. He loved his wife and children. He loved his mother and father, his brother and sisters. He wouldn't leave them that way.

It is no wonder then that after that ghastly skeleton was found and identified,





Group of state highway policemen (above), the backbone of the newly organized Texas Department of Safety, greatly assisted in breaking the case. Right, Texas Department of Safety laboratory where crime is solved scientifically. This laboratory, since its inception, has made a fine record in cracking "unsolvable" cases.

the father and brother demanded action. Determined to fight the case to the finish, to ferret out the facts and obtain justice at any cost, the men hired a special prosecutor.

They chose Allen D. Dabney, a veteran Eastland attorney and one-time prosecutor of the county. If there is such a thing as the Higher Being's mixing a little pit bulldog in a man, it was done in the case of Allen Dabney. A veteran of the state bar, he had earned a reputation throughout Texas for fighting for his client against all odds, to the ultimate ditch. And when he reached that point, he usually did something to the ditch. The McBee family could not have done better in their selection.

McBee strode into Dabney's office soon after it had been more or less generally accepted that his son, tiring of things as they were, had left his home that May morning, walked into the thick underbrush and hanged himself.

"Mr. Dabney," Mr. McBee said, "H. L. didn't kill himself. I know it and my son, Clyde, and the other boys know it. Somebody killed him. Somebody took him out there and hung him and left his body dangling there for more than a year. The peace officers and the district attorney are doing all they can, but I would feel better if I had my own investigator working with them. Will you take the job, and even if it takes ten years, find out who murdered my son?"

Dabney took the job under those conditions. Had ten years been required, he would have worked ten years.

### Investigators Confer

**WE** CONFERRED on the case. Things had become more clean cut by then. On the one side we had this:

A fleshless skeleton hanging from a tree in a dense little woodland. It had been there at least a year, doctors informed us. McBee, dissatisfied with conditions at his home, and unable to right them, had been missing for more than a

year. We knew that when he left he wore the clothes which we found rotted from his remains. He had carried the identification tag in his pocket that day. We knew he had threatened suicide. We knew he was unhappy, despondent, worried sick. It was a perfect setup for suicide.

Contradicting this was his family's unswerving statement and belief that McBee was not the type to go out that way. And there was Dabney's statement to me after he entered the case. It served more than anything to strengthen the murder theory.

"About seven years ago," Mr. Dabney told me. "McBee was in Wisconsin working, when his wife sued him for divorce. She signed an affidavit that she did not know his residence. Under Texas law, she could serve citation by publishing the divorce proceedings in a paper once a week for four weeks. She did this in an obscure publication. But it didn't work. One of McBee's friends cut out the notice and sent it to him, and he rushed back to Texas and came to my office. He was worried, and I looked up the papers. I found that through a court error his wife had been granted a divorce one day too soon, one day before the published citation was in full force. I got the judge to set the decree aside after pointing out his error.

"The wife and McBee met behind closed doors in my office. They laughed and cried and talked for an hour or more. Finally they came out and H. L. told me, 'My wife has decided she will be a wife and mother and cut out some of the things she is doing. I am willing to give her a chance.'

"They left, and later the father and the brother, Clyde, came to my office. They had protested the reunion, but could do nothing about it.

"As they started to leave, Clyde turned to his dad and said, 'Well, this is the beginning of the end. The next time we try to settle this trouble we will have to do it by carrying H. L. to the grave.'"

*For seven years the family had been fearing that something was going to hap-*



*pen to H. L., that tragedy was stalking him, gaining inch by inch. And when it happened, they refused to dismiss it with a suicide verdict.*

Then Rising Star folk started whispering.

### Hint At Illicit Romance

**WE** HEARD little things about a drinking party the night before McBee was supposed to have gone away. It was rumored that during McBee's lifetime, Mrs. McBee and the young ice truck driver were carrying on a pretty open and serious flirtation.

And we learned she called him "my blonde-headed baby" and had referred to the tall youth as "my new sweetie."

We learned that a Rising Star man knew something about a midnight fight between some drunks that had occurred the night McBee disappeared—May 1, 1933. The fight was near the graveyard, and there were groans and talk of knife wounds. And there was a woman's voice, shouting with the voices of men.

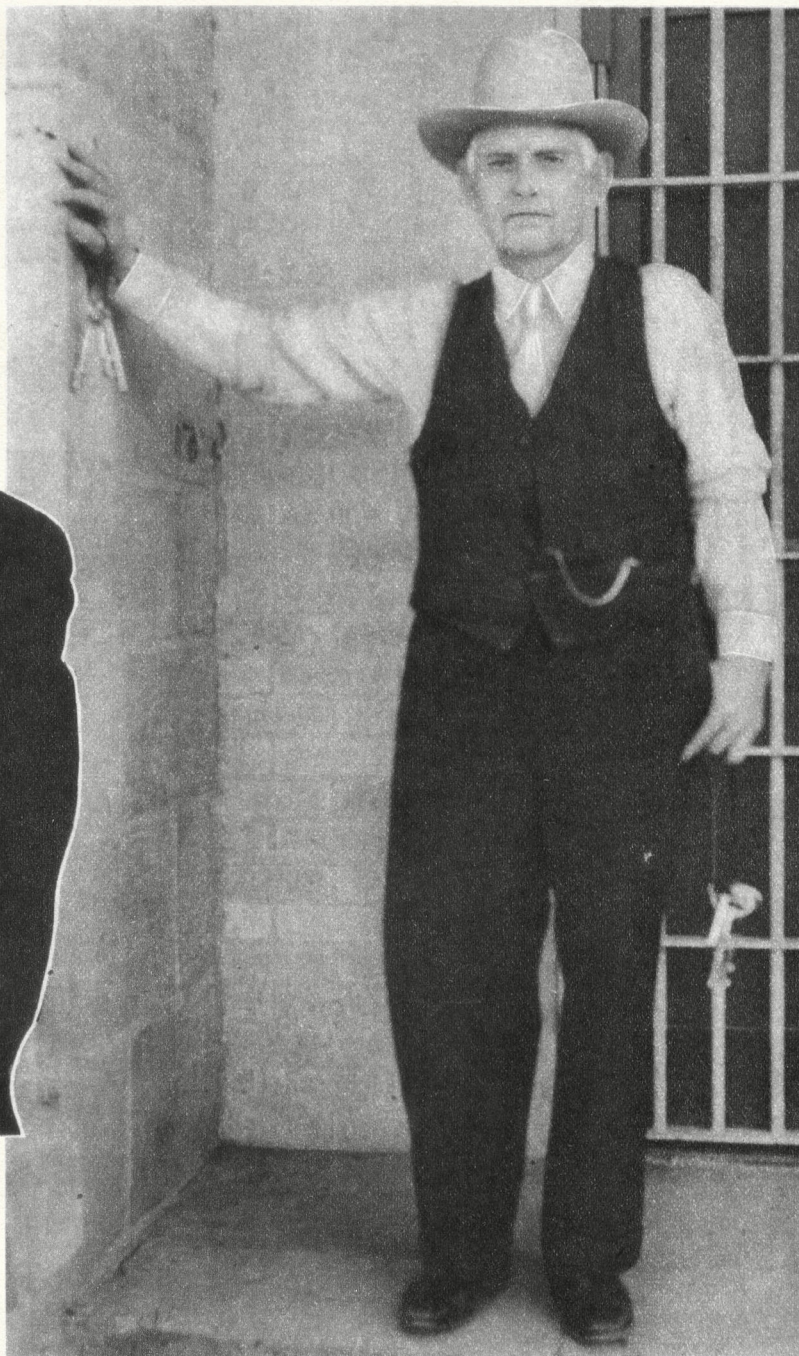
An oil field flirtation, hints of illicit love, rumors of a fatal fight, groans on a dark road only a few yards from where McBee's body was found—these things

STARTLING DETECTIVE





**M. N. Seabourn, assistant Eastland county jailer (right), guarded the killer (above) until he came to trial.**



certainly pointed to murder. But could we prove it?

We centered our attention on two things—the alleged love affair between Mrs. McBee and Raymond Henry, the truck driver, and the rumors of a fight near the graveyard. The latter appeared to be the most promising clue when things began to come to light.

A man residing near Rising Star recalled that on the night of May 1, 1933, he was aroused by an argument going on in the road about 70 yards from his house. "I went out on the porch and heard a baby crying and a woman's voice," he testified. He said also he heard a man's voice protesting the crying baby, and a little later heard the woman shout:

"You're a — of a daddy."

He said he watched as three men surged in front of the car lights, and heard one of the men say, "You've wrecked my home." There was a fight, resounding smacks of bone on flesh. He heard moans. Then the car drove away, leaving a man behind. He shouted out,

"I never will be out with you again. You stuck that knife in me two times." The injured man reeled away, muttering to himself.

The fight in the roadside gave us reason to believe that McBee might have been stabbed near the graveyard, then taken into the clump of trees and hanged by a thick wire.

When the voice of one of the men was identified as that of one M. E. "Sandy" Tyler, a Rising Star oil field worker, we felt encouraged.

We knew Tyler. Officers had had a little trouble with him. And it was learned he had been at McBee's home that night. We wasted no time. Tyler was picked up for questioning immediately.

Any jubilation we might have had at making what we considered some head-

way was soon dispelled. We were doomed to trip over the first of many obstacles that were ahead of us. We could not make out a case against Tyler—we had nothing concrete. A voice in the dark, a woman's voice, groans from the roadside—nothing that would stand in court. Tyler denied any knowledge of a fight, admitted he was a friend of McBee and thought him "a fine fellow," but definitely declared he knew nothing of his disappearance.

We had nothing to prove otherwise. Reluctantly, we released him from custody, and what charges we had against him were dismissed.

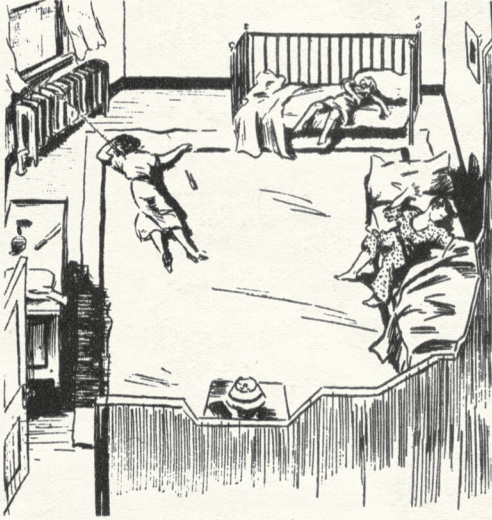
We dropped the possibility that McBee was a victim of the roadside battle, and picked up the next logical angle.

[Continued on page 72]



#### DEATH SCENE

The diagram below illustrates what police found when they entered the Feely apartment and found the young mother and her two children lying dead in the nursery.



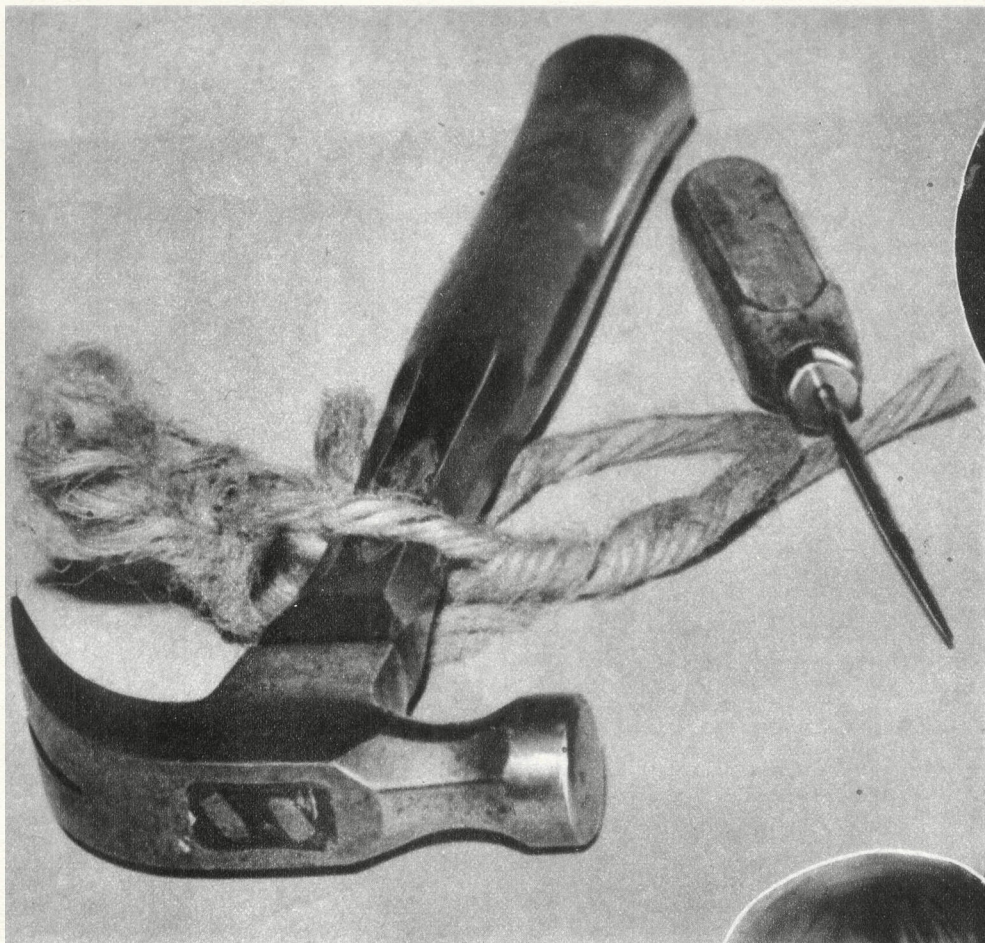
# Pittsburgh's TRIPLE DEATH TRAGEDY



#### VICTIM IN PITTSBURGH'S BAFFLING TRAGEDY

At left, Eleanor Feely, wife of a professor at the University of Pittsburgh, found garroted and stabbed with an ice pick in her home in Pittsburgh's fashionable East End. Above, investigators are shown examining the bedding in the baby's crib in a search for clues to the shocking tragedy which took three lives by violence.





*Death struck three times to take the lives of pretty Eleanor Feely and her two children by stabbing and strangulation—a triple crime riddle with a surprising denouement.*



#### LETHAL WEAPONS

At left, the weapons used in the triple slaying. Stab wounds inflicted by the ice pick were not fatal. Each of the victims was strangled to death, the hammer being used to fashion a diabolical tourniquet.

**P**ITTSBURGH police faced a baffling mystery when they burst into the home of Martin J. Feely, Pittsburgh University professor, and found the bodies of his attractive wife, Eleanor, and their two children, Robert, 5, and Janice, 3. All had been stabbed with an ice pick and strangled to death.

Various factors served to complicate the death riddle. Doors and windows to the apartment were locked. There had been no robbery nor signs of struggle. The family was ideally happy. They had no enemies or financial difficulties. If a prowler had entered the house Mrs. Feely's cries would have been heard by other residents. The fact that Mrs. Feely was right handed and the ice pick blows had been delivered from the left seemed to preclude the theory that the young mother had dealt the lethal blows.

But finally, after all leads had been exhausted, police arrived at their original conclusion — that Mrs. Feely had slain her two children and then taken her own life. The case was closed and entered on the records as murder and suicide.



Stabbed and garroted as was their mother, little Robert Feely, 5, and his baby sister, Janice, 3, were found dead when police invaded the ill-fated apartment in answer to a landlord's summons.

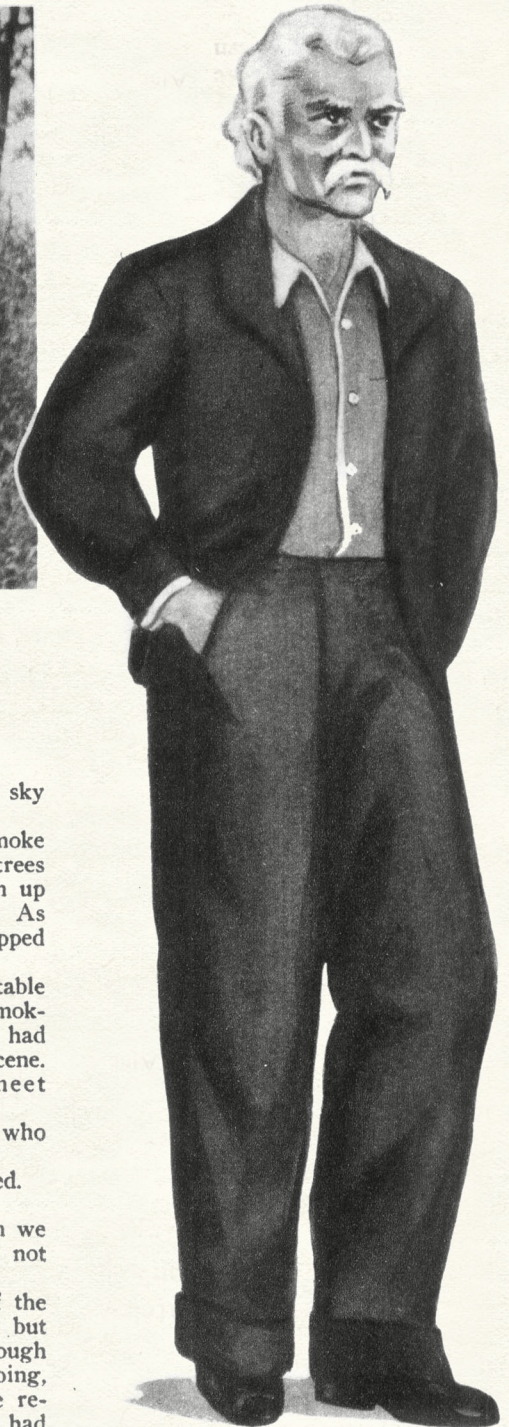




# How We Cracked The GRIM



Down the North Redding road, above, near Topstone, Conn., the slayer dragged the victim of his murderous frenzy. At right, an artist's sketch of the missing George Hultz, drawn from a description supplied by officers who worked on the baffling case.



A FEW minutes past 6 o'clock on the morning of Saturday, May 5, 1923, the telephone in the Ridgefield Barracks rang sharply. The trooper at the desk took the call. He listened intently then turned to me excitedly.

"There's trouble on the Van Rein estate in West Redding," he said. "George Hultz's cottage is on fire. They're afraid he is trapped inside."

"Tell them we'll be right over," I cried and made for the door. At that time I was the sergeant in charge of the barracks.

A heavy dew lay on the grass as I started out in a patrol car with State Trooper Henry Palau at the wheel but

***Police suspected murder when George Hultz disappeared but they had no proof until a lake gave up its swollen dead to confound a brutal slayer and deliver him into official hands.***

the rising sun and a cloudless, blue sky gave promise of a perfect day.

When we reached the scene smoke was pouring up from a clump of trees behind the Van Rein estate. I ran up the slope. Trooper Palau followed. As I rounded a turn in the path, I stopped suddenly.

What had once been a comfortable four-room cottage was a mass of smoking ruins. Already the excitement had attracted several neighbors to the scene. One of them ran forward to meet us.

It was Harry Barrett, a farmer who lived nearby.

"Has Hultz been found?" I asked.

Barrett shook his head.

"We thought he was inside when we telephoned," he said. "Now we're not sure where he is."

I hurried around to the back of the cottage. The heat drove me back but not before I caught a glimpse through the swirling smoke of a piece of tubing, warped by the flames. It was the remains of a rifle barrel. If Hultz had

## A CONNECTICUT



By Lieutenant JOHN C. KELLY

Connecticut State Police

As told to LOWELL AMES NORRIS

# RIDDLE of Umpawaug Pond

been trapped inside he was past all human aid.

Trooper Palau continued his investigation while I returned to Barrett.

"What do you know about this?" I asked.

"Happened to look out my window early this morning," he said. "Saw smoke so I hurried over. Found the cottage a mass of flames, couldn't raise Hultz so I rushed over to the Dewsnap Farm."

I knew that George Hultz, living on this estate as a caretaker, was the foreman of the nearby Dewsnap farm.

"Mr. Dewsnap told me they hadn't seen George since last night when they paid him off so I came back and called you. There's something I want to show you."

He led the way around to the front of the cottage where the door had fallen in and pointed to a broad, flat stone which Hultz had used for a door stoop.

## Makes Startling Discovery

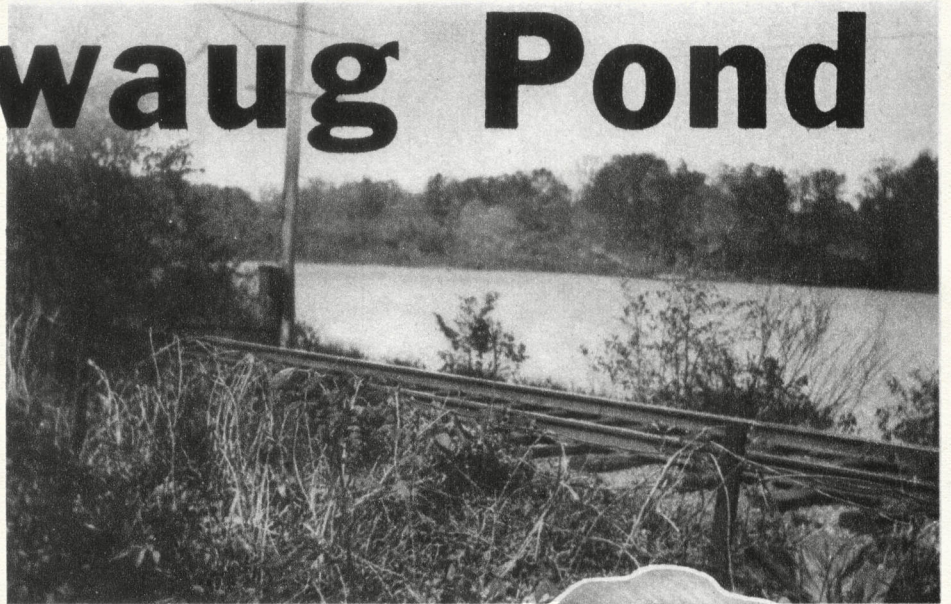
ON THE edge of this stone was a deep, dark pool of blood. More blood had dripped down into the dirt. As I bent down to examine this blood-caked stone, I made a startling discovery. Taking a small piece of paper, I wrapped up my find and placed it in my pocket without speaking.

When I turned to search the spot more thoroughly I noted another significant detail. It was early morning and the grass was still covered with a heavy coating of dew. Down the grass slope leading toward a patch of woods was a clearly defined path where something heavy had been dragged during the night hours.

I joined Trooper Palau to check on what he had discovered.

"Find anything?" I asked.

"Not much," he replied, "but he was here all right last night. There's a fresh woodchuck skin in the back yard which he must have shot for supper. The meat on the pelt is still fresh."



A trail of blood led from the smoking ruins of George Hultz's home across the railroad tracks in the foreground to the shore of Umpawaug Pond. At right, Lieutenant Kelly (then a sergeant), author of this official story.

We returned to the front and I showed him the dark pool on the front door step.

"Perhaps he fell, hurting himself," he remarked, "then dragged himself through the grass to the road seeking help."

I nodded. It was a possibility but a remote one in view of the ghastly clue which I had in my pocket. But other people were arriving and I had no time to tell Palau what I had found.

One of the newcomers edged closer, a stocky, well built man in his early twenties. I recognize him as John Dandone, an ex-soldier who had worked with Hultz on the Dewsnap farm.

"Where is my good friend, Hultz?" he cried.

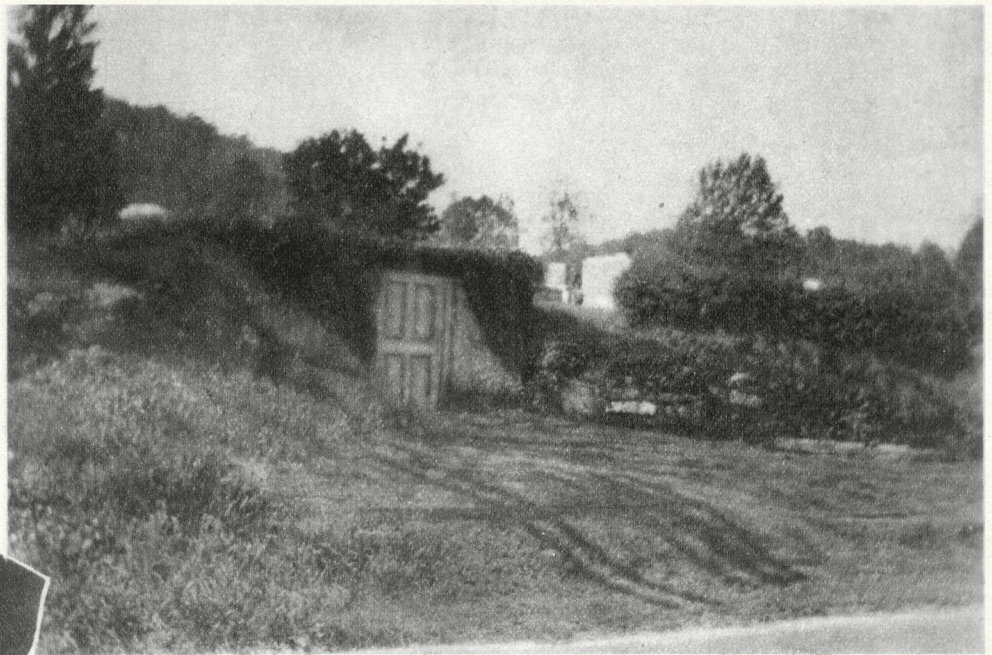
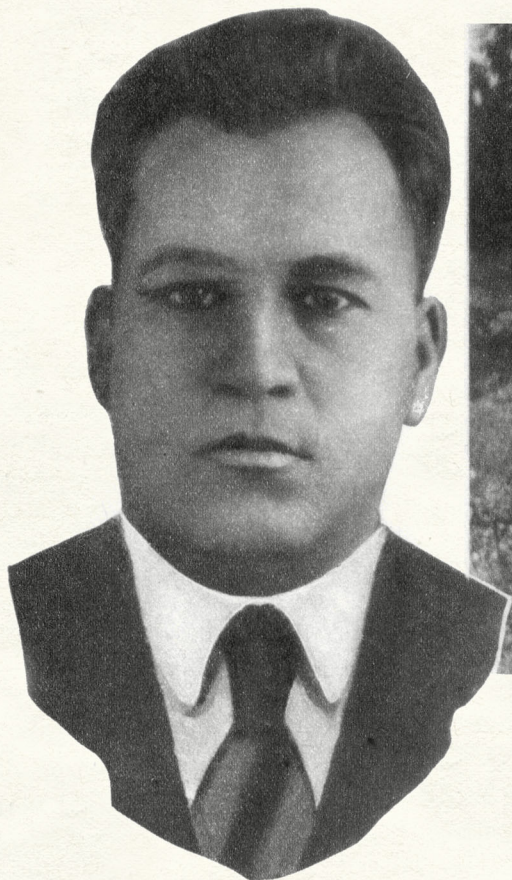
"That's what we would like to know," I replied brusquely, anxious to get away. I caught Trooper Palau's eye. "Come on, we've got to follow that trail."

There was no time to lose. The sun was high and although the trail was still visible, it was now only a question of minutes before the dew would vanish. We followed the trail down the grass slope toward a patch of woods. Then



## STATE POLICE CLASSIC





Shadowed for days, the man at the left was finally taken into custody. The story that fell from his lips solved the riddle of Umpawaug Pond. What was his motive for murder? Above, the receiving vault at the Branchville cemetery where the slayer was faced with his victim.

the trail switched away from the woodland and led across a field.

Here the marks became confused. Trampled grass and tumbled weeds revealed a spot where some heavy object had been set down on the damp ground. I noted a small, clearly outlined indentation such as might have been made by a human head. Trooper Palau and I both studied this with care. Down among the grass roots I discovered blood splatterings. Just beyond the spot was a long leather pocketbook. It was empty, but bore the name "George Hultz" in faded gold lettering.

### Police Suspect Murder

**G**RIMLY we continued. The path led to the fence beside the road and ended. We separated, carefully scrutinizing every inch of the road for more stains. Already a terrible suspicion was forming in our minds.

Just a short distance away across some railroad tracks and beyond a small park, the waters of Umpawaug Pond gleamed in the sunshine. Did the answer to our unspoken questions lie hidden beneath those sparkling waters?

We climbed the fence surrounding the park and tramped up and down the bank of the pond. Then I spied a boat moored to a telephone post. The oars were missing but several boards lay in the bow which might easily serve for paddles. The boat had been sheltered from the morning sun and its surface was still coated with dew except on the broad seat at the stern. There small, irregular patches revealed dried out spots where

some human body had rested. I now felt certain that the body of George Hultz was in that pond.

But a diligent search failed to reveal any further clues and we retraced our steps. Back at the blackened ruins Trooper Palau drew me to one side.

"What makes you so certain that Hultz met with foul play?" he asked.

I looked around to make sure we were unobserved. Then from a pocket in my uniform jacket I extracted the small object which I had found near the cottage.

Trooper Palau started as his eyes rested upon it. It was a bloody, human tooth. A good bit of jaw bone had come away with the imbedded roots, a ghastly reminder of the terrific force which smashed it loose.

It was noon when I returned to the barracks at Ridgefield. Certain in my own mind that a murder had been committed, I telephoned state police headquarters in Hartford and had a long conversation with Superintendent Robert T. Hurley. Acting upon instructions, I then telephoned Sergeant Frank Virelli (now lieutenant at headquarters) at Bridgeport and communicated the few known facts in my possession.

"I'll be over at once," he promised.

I next detailed all of my available men to report to Trooper Palau at West Redding for a more thorough search of the premises and then returned to West Redding myself. The area occupied by the burned cottage and the immediate vicinity had been roped off. Troopers stood on guard keeping back the crowds as their fellows worked among the charred and still smoking ruins.

Trooper Palau reported immediately upon my arrival. "There's no trace of Hultz inside the cottage," he said, "but

we've run across something you may find interesting." He paused and then added significantly, "The front door of the cottage escaped unharmed."

I examined the door and found that although the top and bottom were badly scorched its middle had escaped unharmed. One glance showed me that the door had been forced. The steel lock was thrown and the key was still in the key hole on what had been the inside of the door. Further examination of the thrown lock revealed that it had been bent by terrific pressure. The forced door strengthened my suspicions that the 72-year-old man had met a violent fate.

### Check Victim's Life

**W**HEN Sergeant Virelli arrived we assembled the few known facts about George Hultz. He had been a resident of West Redding for almost twenty years. It was rumored that the man was well off and kept a hidden cache of money in the cottage. From observation I knew Hultz liked nothing better than to flash a twenty or even a fifty-dollar bill upon the slightest provocation, usually intimidating there was plenty more where that came from. He was quick tempered but he was generous to a fault, free-handed and always willing to share a meal or even money with those less fortunate. At seventy-two, he was strong and vigorous and apparently in the best of health.

As far as we knew, the last time Hultz had been seen alive was late the previous afternoon at the Dewsnap farm when he received his week's wages. Neighbors also stated that they saw lights in the cottage between 8 and 9 o'clock. Bashford Bain, the station master of the nearby railroad station, Topstone, told me

STARTLING DETECTIVE



he had heard the report of a gun from the direction of the Van Rein estate soon after 6 o'clock. I attached little significance to this fact. It was probably when the old man shot the woodchuck.

Several hours passed. Meanwhile, out on Umpawaug Pond, troopers continued to drag the waters but without result.

"You're sure the old man is dead?" Sergeant Virelli asked.

"I am positive," I replied.

I extended for his inspection a blood-soaked garment I had discovered a few minutes before, thrown beneath a bush near the now vanished trail. Sergeant Virelli examined my find with interest. It was a man's vest of a size which might have easily been worn by the missing Hultz.

"I feel sure the man who wore this vest was dragged from the cottage towards the lake," I went on.

"How do you make that out?" inquired the sergeant.

"See this common pin here on the front of the vest?" I said. "You will notice that all these pieces of dried grass were caught by the top of the pin, convincing me that the man who wore this vest was dragged face downwards by his legs. Only a man who was dead would probably have been dragged in this manner."

"But are you sure that this is George Hultz's vest?" he asked.

### Identify Vest

I LOOKED up. John Dandone was standing just a few feet away. "Several people have identified it as such," I told Virelli, "but here's a friend of the old man." I called Dandone, who instantly identified the garment as the vest Hultz always wore while at work.

"There's something I think you ought to know," he continued. "A chap who lives in the neighborhood was down this way last night. He didn't return until early this morning."

"How do you know?" Sergeant Virelli demanded. "Where were you last night?"

Dandone's expression did not change nor did his smile fade. "That's a fair question," he acknowledged, "and one I am very willing to answer. I was at home. I live up at the Dewsnap farm and they can tell you all you want to know about my movements."

"How did you get along with Hultz?" Virelli thundered.

"Fine," Dandone answered. "He was a very good friend."

He swung on his heel and was gone.

"Who is that man?" asked Virelli.

"His name is John Dandone," I replied. "He's an ex-soldier and for the past few months has been working up at the Dewsnap farm for about fifteen dollars a month."



From the station master at the Topstone station, right, investigating officers received valuable information which tightened the net around a suspect and led to his arrest.

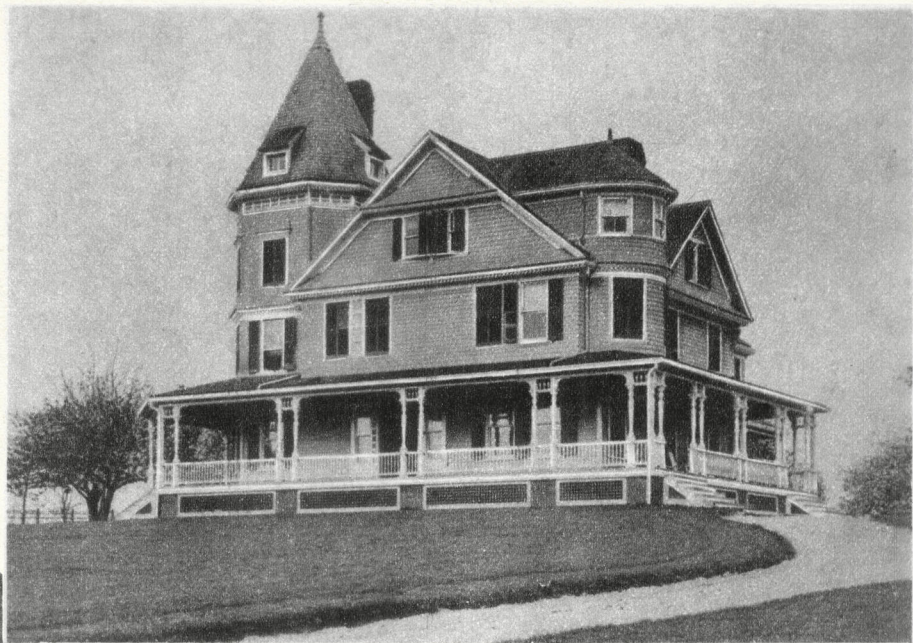
Later we visited the Dewsnap farm and checked Dandone's story. Mark Dewsnap told us that Dandone had come home early on Friday night and had gone directly to bed.

Throughout Saturday afternoon state troopers worked ceaselessly, dragging for the body I was certain lay beneath the waters of Umpawaug Pond. On Sunday they supplemented the grappling irons with a huge net obtained by Sergeant Virelli in Bridgeport. This net, weighted down and then dragged ceaselessly back and forth on the bottom of the pond, was equally unsuccessful.

Armed with grappling hooks and an acetylene torch, these constables recovered the body of George Hultz from the dark waters of the pond. Left to right, they are: William J. Kiefer, Chester A. Morley, Andrew J. Nearing and Timothy J. McMahon.







**Sergeant Frank Virelli (now a lieutenant at headquarters) was active from the opening of the case to its successful conclusion. Above, the state police barracks at Ridgefield, Conn., nerve center of the investigation which cracked the mystery.**

The troopers were then replaced by David Goldstein and Patrick Connolly of Bridgeport, two experts skilled in the recovery of dead bodies. The dragging continued. This time I felt more optimistic that tangible results would be forthcoming.

Early that same day Superintendent of State Police Robert T. Hurley arrived. Superintendent Hurley, Sergeant Virelli and I went at once into conference.

It appeared that Hultz's love for displaying his wealth had been his undoing, exciting the cupidity of some local criminal who knew Hultz's aversion to banks and accepted literally the rumor that the old man had large sums of money secreted in his four-room cottage.

Painstakingly we checked the stories of various people living in the immediate neighborhood. One of the first persons we interviewed was the chap seen by Dandone in the neighborhood Friday night. The suspect, who lived with his aunt near the Topstone station in West Redding, told us a convincing story. He said he left his aunt's home that night about 11 o'clock to see his father. He returned at 5 o'clock the next morning. Both times when he passed the Van Rein estate all seemed quiet and in order.

Having exhausted virtually all of the local leads, I went to Norwalk where I had a long chat with Chief of Police William R. Pennington concerning a certain gangster suspect. I learned definitely that this man was not connected in any way with the crime at West Redding but my trip was not entirely in vain. Chief Pennington told me of another sus-

pect who might be implicated. He was a man posing as a state trooper on a supposed secret mission, working out of headquarters at Hartford. I decided that this tip was worth following.

It was late when I returned to the Ridgefield barracks but late as it was, I put in an urgent call for Anthony Martino in Danbury. Tony was an excellent detective and at that time did a great deal of undercover work for me in and about Danbury.

"Listen, Tony," I said when he entered my office, "have you run across a man lately here in southern Connecticut who claims to be a state trooper on secret detail from headquarters in Hartford?"

Tony smiled knowingly.

"I've met him," he admitted and mentioned his name. It was the same person Chief Pennington of Norwalk had told me about. "He's going around with a girl I know. I understand from her brother that they are to be married soon."

"I want you to find out all you can about this man," I ordered. "Keep him under constant observation."

"I'm on, Sergeant," Tony replied. "He won't lose me."

### **No Trace Of Missing Man**

**M**EANWHILE, out on Umpawaug Pond, David Goldstein and Patrick Connolly continued dragging. Up and down, back and forth they went across the broad expanse of water. They discovered nothing.

Nor could troopers, searching the swamps which hemmed the pond on three sides, find any further traces of the missing man.

Coroner John J. Phelan visited the scene early Tuesday morning. I showed him the pool of blood still visible upon

the door stoop, the tooth and bit of lower jaw, together with the other grim bits of evidence we had found. He glanced at these clues and then looked over the scene with a professional eye.

"There's no question in my mind but that this is the scene of a homicide," he said, "yet you have no proof that the murdered man is George Hultz. How do you know Hultz didn't dispose of some enemy, burn the house, leave his vest behind as a blind and then disappear?"

I agreed that this might be possible, but I was by no means convinced. We continued our search for the corpus delicti.

Later on the night of that same day, a man stood in the simply furnished living room of the apartment occupied by Hultz's divorced wife in Danbury.

The woman eyed the man sharply. "You say you are from the state police? But I've already told Sergeant Kelly all I know and my son has also told them he has not seen his father for several weeks. What more do you want to know?"

"The information you gave Sergeant Kelly," the man stated, "is all right as far as it goes but it didn't go far enough." He then proceeded to ask a number of questions and finally left.

As he walked down the steps into the warm spring night, another man slipped out of the shadows and touched his arm. The police officer started, then smiled when he saw who it was.

"You startled me," he said.

The stern expression on the other's face did not relax.

"What were you doing in there?" he demanded.

The other laughed. "I can't see that it is any of your business."

*[Continued on page 76]*

**STARTLING DETECTIVE**



# The Clue of the KILLERS' CABIN

By J. VICTOR BATE

THERE was nothing about the trim little cottage on Maxine avenue in the suburban village of St. Clair Shores— just northeast of Detroit—to indicate crime or violence. Outwardly the cottage resembled various others which dotted the outlying sections of the town.

The setting was peaceful. A short distance away the restless waters of Lake St. Clair slapped gently against the ice-encrusted shore. Ceaselessly, monotonously, the waves whispered—and the burden of their whispering on the Monday afternoon of December 12, 1932, was an ominous dirge of death.

Inside the cottage the rooms were heavy with cigar and cigaret smoke. The stale odor of home brew and moonshine liquor filled the place. Several men ranged themselves at the small bar or sat at tables as the female owner and her barmaid plied their thirsty patrons with forbidden spirits.

At length there was a lull in the serving and the barmaid hurried to the kitchen where a tall young man stood waiting patiently.

"Now," she said, "I'll take care of that milk bill. How much do we owe you?"

William Marshall, brown eyes flashing pleasantly, stated the amount and

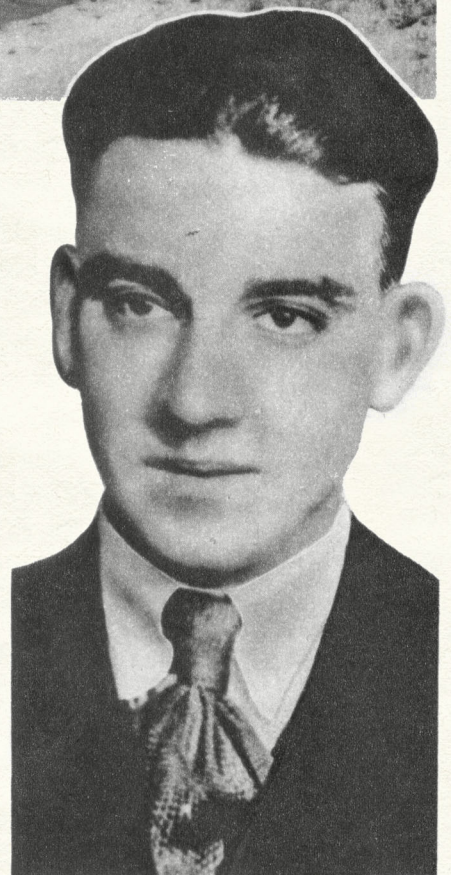
scrawled the word "paid" across the face of a slip as the girl counted out the change. "Thanks," he said and turned to leave.

Half way across the big room at the front of the house Marshall turned sharply at a sudden commotion. A youth in a suede jacket stood at the bar arguing violently with an older man next to him. As if at an awaited signal, three other youths sprang from their seats at a table. Two of them brandished pistols.

"Up with your mitts, everybody," snarled one of them. "This is a stick-up!"

Marshall had read much of this sort of thing in the papers, had heard of hold-ups in many of the places that he visited along his route day after day. He knew that hardly a day passed in metropolitan Detroit without its regular quota of gun play and robbery. But this was the first time that he had ever encountered it face to face.

Only a few steps from the front door, he measured his chances of escape as a jumble of thoughts raced through his mind. Thoughts of his own little cottage, of Rose, his wife, of the kiddies, Eleanor and William, Junior; of the leaden death that might spurt at any moment from the guns in the hands of these drink-inspired young desperadoes.



Manhunters pushed their way into the wild Au Sable river country in northern Michigan on the trail of fugitive killers who fatally shot William Marshall, above, during a daylight holdup in a Detroit suburb.

## A MICHIGAN MURDER MYSTERY





Calling at the cottage above, a suburban speakeasy, to collect a bill, milkman William Marshall found himself involved in a holdup in which he lost his life. At right, Mrs. Marshall and her children, left widowed and fatherless by gangland guns.



For the moment no attention was paid to him. The guns were trained on others in the room. He made a quick decision. In two long strides he gained the door, swung it open and made for his creamery truck parked in the street.

Inside a voice shouted a command: "Get that guy!"

Behind him Marshall heard several quick, sharp reports. But he did not stop to investigate. He was concerned only with reaching his truck.

### Slain By Bandit

**T**HERE was another report—louder. A slug struck him in the left shoulder, tore on downward and through his heart. Marshall dropped to his knees beside the truck, gasped desperately for breath that would not come. Then he sprawled in a quivering heap on the ground, one outstretched hand almost touching the truck that he had failed to reach in time.

He could not see the cruel, satisfied gleam in the eyes of the youth in the doorway, holding a still-smoking weapon aloft. Other shots rang out in the place as the killer turned toward his three companions.

"Got him!" he shouted. "Let's scram. This joint's too hot now!"

More shots. A woman's terrified screams. Tortured groans from a wounded man.

Pocketing their weapons, the four youths beat a hasty retreat from the shambles within the little cottage and leaped into a black Chrysler sedan. Wheels spun in the light snow and the machine hurtled down the street toward busy Mack avenue, to lose itself in the Detroit-bound traffic.

Unsuccessful in their pursuit of the

bandit car Chief of Police Abe Allard and Patrolman Trufly Dubay returned to the scene of the shooting to find that William Marshall was dead. Ambulances from Mt. Clemens were preparing to rush other victims to the hospital. The owner of the place had been shot through the arm. Three of her patrons had been wounded. One had suffered a scalp wound, a second had been drilled through both legs and a third, a slot machine collector, had been severely wounded in the chest.

At St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital in Mt. Clemens Chief Allard and Sheriff Wylie Wilkinson began to question these victims in the hope of gaining at least a partial description of the bandits. None could recall having seen any of the youths before.

"They came in," the proprietress declared, "sat down just like the other patrons and ordered drinks. Nobody paid any attention to them until one of them started an argument at the bar and the others began shooting."

There was nothing to go on in that statement. But by carefully pressing the victims for details the two officers were successful finally in gaining a reasonably good description of the death-dealing quartet.

One had been blond with pale blue eyes. He wore a suede leather jacket. Another had a sharp, peaked face and wore a gray felt hat tilted jauntily at the back of his head. Still another was slim and dark with a noticeably pointed nose. The fourth had a little mustache and dark hair. There were other distinguishing characteristics of the four that were recalled by those who lay moaning on hospital cots.

Not much to aid in a search through a

city the size of Detroit for four deadly young hoodlums. But it was a beginning, at least.

Inspector William J. Collins, head of the Detroit police holdup squad (now deputy chief of detectives), had these descriptions flashed to him at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. He added this information to his previous broadcast, to be on the alert to pick up and hold every possible suspect.

### Studies Fatal Shooting

**C**OLLINS learned that the slot machine collector had taken nine dollars from a machine in the bootleg cottage just before the shooting started. He was robbed of the money and said that he had been closely watched from the time he entered the place. That immediately suggested the theory that the bandits were acquainted with the collector's route and had waited for him, hoping that by mid-afternoon he would be carrying a sizeable amount of money. Did this mark the beginning of a new holdup racket? Or, more remote possibility, did the shooting mark the outbreak of a new slot machine war?

Since all information pointed definitely to robbery as the basic motive behind the tragedy, the case remained with the holdup squad. Inspector Collins assigned Lieutenants Edward Graff, Albert Ruth and Harry Schouw (now an inspector) and Detective Joseph Kinsler as his direct assistants in the matter. Captain Donald S. Leonard, commander of the Detroit area of the Michigan State Police, joined this group as the chase got under way.

Collins and Leonard personally interviewed the slot machine owner. He flouted the idea that a slot machine war was in the offing and said that no similar

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← The killers made a mistake when they forgot to destroy the photo at left, found in their city apartment. It led police to a woodland hideout and was the clue which broke the case.



attempts had been made to waylay his other collectors.

"Just an ordinary bunch of punks out to grab anything they can get away with, any way they can get it," Collins summed it up back at his office. "Let's take a look at a few pictures."

He pulled from his files the countless "mugs" of known criminals, both big-time professional bandits and petty stick-up men who were then being sought for a variety of activities around the city. Together with Leonard he pored over them. In the end both were satisfied that the slayers of William Marshall were not among that group.

"Now, just by way of getting this thing on some sort of a systematic basis," Collins suggested, "let's take a whirl at the descriptions of some of these birds who've been working that epidemic of gas station stickups out on the east side lately."

Graff and Schouw joined them in checking over a long list of descriptions. As they went down the list the characteristics of several of the reported bandits checked with those of the men now sought on the more serious charge of murder.

"And say, that reminds me," spoke up Schouw, "we had a drug store job out on East Jefferson night before last—a bunch of punks. One of 'em had dark hair and another light. One had a long, skinny face and another had a little mustache. That tallies with these guys and the ones we want!"

Suddenly they were interrupted by a uniformed officer who stood in the doorway with two wide-eyed youths in custody.

"Come on, get in there!" the copper commanded. Then, addressing Collins, "These birds were picked up in a black Chrysler on the East Side a while ago, Inspector. Thought you'd like to look 'em over."

Collins beamed. "Sure thing! Nice work!" He turned to the two youths. "What are your names?"

One of the youths gulped and spoke up

→ By studying the snapshot of the cabin above, Conservation Officer Arthur Leitz was able to locate the killers' lair.

in a whining voice: "I'm Louis Drover and he's Charlie Manning. We don't even know why we're here!"

"We'll settle that in a minute," the inspector said. "How many guys did you plug this afternoon?"

The youths exchanged startled glances. They looked back fearfully at Collins.

"Gosh," one of them whimpered, "we don't getcha at all, Chief. We ain't done nothin' at all."

But they could give no account of their movements during the afternoon and they were rushed to Mt. Clemens to face the victims in the hospital.

### Fail To Identify Suspects

THERE disappointment quickly replaced the official jubilation that had been felt on the trip northward. Each of the injured looked them over carefully and gave the same answer. They were not the killers of William Marshall.

The investigators were used to taking their bad breaks with the good, however, and with that pair dismissed from their minds settled down to a night of following tips and making the most of every underworld contact in an effort to ferret out the identity of the slayers.

But at 8 o'clock Tuesday morning the results were nil. Other black Chrysler sedans had been located under questionable circumstances during the night, but their owners were either entirely above reproach or were able to establish satisfactory alibis. Countless suspects were questioned with the same result.

The telephone on Collins' desk jangled, as it had done repeatedly through the night. As he listened to the message the inspector's eyes brightened. Crashing the instrument back in its place, he leaped to his feet.

"Come on, fellows," he said excitedly. "This tip's good. I know the guy who

gave it to me. Out on Hillgar avenue!" On the way to the car Collins continued his explanation. "A lad refuses to go outside the house this morning. Has the folks buying papers for him and he's watching the big lines on the murder. Enough said, eh?"

A half hour later, having summoned a police cruiser and set its uniformed crew on guard with submachine guns, the detectives entered the Hillgar avenue house. No one appeared to be about. Collins motioned to a stairway, quietly took the lead. They peered into several rooms on the second floor whose doors were open. All were empty. At a closed door they halted.

"Now then!" said Collins grimly. His gun in hand as the others drew theirs, he turned the knob. It yielded softly and the detectives stepped inside to face a slight, fallow-faced youth who sat up in surprise on a bed and blinked at them with sleep-filled eyes.

He answered perfectly to the description of one of the bandit quartet!

Rubbing the sleep from his eyes as he was frisked for a weapon that was not there, he answered questions with a sullen defiance. A driver's license gave the name of Alvin Rebeck, 23. He admitted the card was his.

"But what d'ya want me to squawk about?" he whined. "I don't know nothin' or I sure wouldn't be waitin' here for you like a lamb, would I? Just because I'm takin' a wink in my clothes—"

"All right!" said Collins. "We'll see about that later."

While the suspect was being questioned at headquarters without results, Leonard raced up the shore and shortly returned with some of the victims and others who had been witnesses to the



shooting. Each, in turn, picked Rebeck unquestionably from the show-up as one of the wanted gunmen!

So far so good, even though the suspect still refused to talk. Leonard, joined by Corporal Clarkson Ochs of his staff, Schouw, Ruth, Kinsler and Graff, turned back to the rooming house. This time a man was there. He knew little about Rebeck except that he had a roommate who was seldom around. A further search of the room revealed nothing.

A short time later the roommate was picked up in a speakeasy. He, likewise, seemed unwilling to answer questions although his appearance did not impress the investigators as one of the gang they sought. He did, however, reveal the names of individuals known as intimates of Rebeck.

### Tipster Supplies Lead

THESE were investigated and checked but without result. Again the case appeared to have hit a snag until suddenly a second tip broke through Collins' office and set things whirling once more. This time it was the name of a woman supposed to know something about Norman Leslie and Sam McComb, two of Rebeck's pals who had not been located. Their descriptions tallied somewhat with those of two of the wanted gunmen.

But at the address given the officers drew a blank. The woman was not at home.

"I know of a Norman Leslie, though," the landlady said thoughtfully. "I believe I can tell you about where he lives."

She could give only an approximate address and nothing whatever concerning Leslie's character or occupation or any of the other things that interested the anxious sleuths. But they followed her directions and questioned another woman.

"We're looking for a chap by the name of Norman Leslie," Schouw said. "Are you acquainted with him?"

The woman considered. "Yes, I know him slightly. But I haven't seen him in some time. As a matter of fact, I believe he was married recently."

Schouw suppressed his excitement, pressed for further information.

"No, I never heard the girl's name." The woman appeared in deep thought. "But I know she has a brother who is a policeman. His name is—let me see, I've heard it mentioned—Harry! That's it!"

Things seemed to be moving definitely toward a climax of some sort. But it all hinged on the finding of a policeman whose first name was Harry, whose last name was unknown and whose sister had recently married. Considering the size of Detroit's police department, it was an order requiring all the patience the weary sleuths could command.

Wednesday was nearly spent when they rapped at the door of a trim little cottage. This was the home of one of the many Harrys who were policemen, numbers of whom had already been interviewed in vain. This man had just come off duty and was asleep. When he was awakened he admitted readily that he had a sister who had only recently been married.

Grim smiles wreathed the faces of the detectives. A break at last!

"Is her husband a guy by the name of Leslie?"

"No, his name is Maurer but—say his first name is Leslie. Leslie Maurer. Why? What's up?"

Ignoring the questions, to spare him for the present the details of their suspicions, Leonard fired the next query.

"Where are they living now?"

The officer told him. Leonard jotted it down. Then, stopping only to apolo-

gize to the sleepy, bewildered man for the intrusion, they sped through traffic to the address he had furnished. Pulling up in front of a big apartment building they scanned the directory and found a card reading "Maurer-Lieb."

"Huh!" Graff observed. "The birds nest here all right."

Cautiously they ascended to the fourth floor, sought out their number and listened at the door. There was a movement and faint voices within. Luck was with them. But it might not be so easy yet! Once again guns were drawn and Leonard tapped on the door. It opened a crack and Kinsler shoved the toe of his shoe into the space while the others heaved with their shoulders and jammed their way inside.

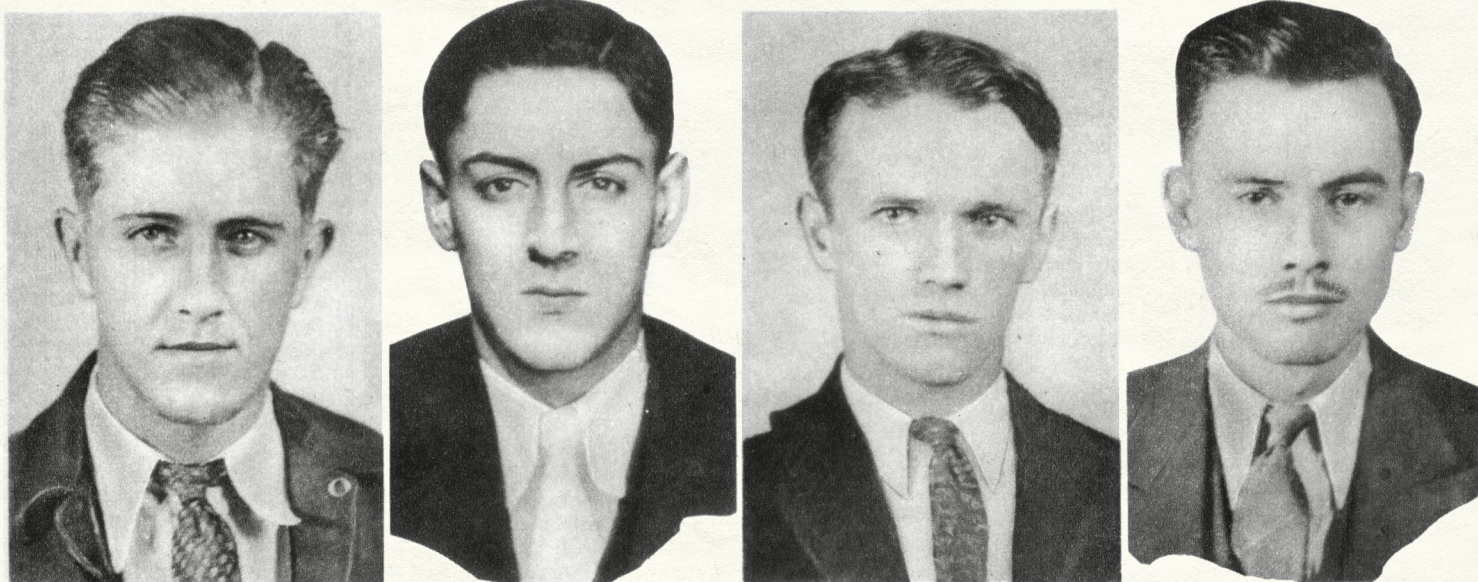
### Crash Suspects' Flat

BUT there was no deafening roar of gunfire, no murderous hail of lead against their invasion. A quick glance about showed that the only occupants were two young women, apparently preparing for bed, who stared open-mouthed and speechless at the unceremonious entrance of the officers.

Firing a barrage of rapid-fire questions, the sleuths quickly learned that the girls were the wives of Leslie Maurer and Sam Lieb. Photographs of the husbands found in a general search of the place tallied with the descriptions of the two fugitive killers.

Both girls were anxious to aid the police in every way and answered questions readily. But neither could explain the absence of their mates. They had left hurriedly a few hours before without a word as to where they were going.

The sleuths decided to wait. They spent their time in a further search of the premises that revealed nothing of importance. But when an hour had passed

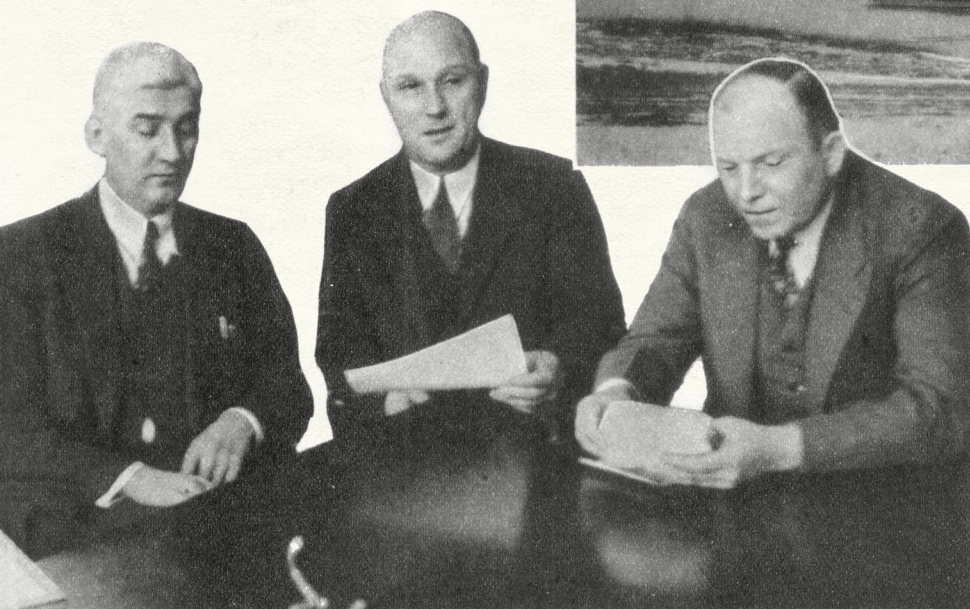


### YOUTHFUL QUARTET HELD FOR QUESTIONING

Because they answered to the general descriptions of the four young gunmen who staged the daylight robbery of the speakeasy in which Marshall was shot in an attempted escape, the quartet shown above were taken into custody after an extended manhunt and held for questioning. From left to right, they are: Sam Lieb, 22; Leslie Maurer, 23; Albert Rebeck, 23; Archie Burd, 22. What did they know about the case?



Detroit police, suburban officers, state police and county sheriffs joined forces in a hunt for the killers. Left to right, below: Lieutenants Albert Ruth and Harry Schouw and Detective Sergeant Joseph Kinsler, active in the investigation. The trail ended near Cook Dam, right, deep in the wilderness along the Au Sable river,



without a sign of the men, uniformed officers were posted as a watch and the others left. Leonard and Schouw headed for Mt. Clemens with several photographs to be shown to witnesses of the Monday afternoon shooting while the others returned to headquarters with similar pictures to check there.

By midnight the heat was on in dead earnest. For at Mt. Clemens the pictures of Maurer and Lieb had been positively identified as two of the murdering quartet. A check at headquarters revealed that both had criminal records. Both men had been arrested as car thieves and had been under suspicion as gunmen for some time.

### Case Progresses

**T**HUS, with Rebeck already in custody as a certain member of the gang and two others identified as known criminals, the case was undeniably progressing. Catching up with the trio at large, of course, was still a huge problem.

Copies of the photographs were furnished to officers throughout the department. On Thursday morning detectives returned to the honeymoon apartment. The girls were at a loss to understand the continued absence of their husbands. They told police that the missing men had telephoned to say they were in Ohio and expected to be gone for some time.

The suspects, then, were undoubtedly on the run. Whether or not they had actually telephoned from Ohio was open to question; but it was certain that they

would not return to the apartment now that the alarm had been spread.

Then one of the girls remembered that the pair might have gone hunting. They had a hunting lodge somewhere. No, she didn't know the location of the place.

Schouw interrupted to show her a snapshot which he had found in a bureau drawer. "Is that the place?"

The girl nodded.

The picture showed a neat log cabin set down in a clump of birch trees. It might have been a cabin in the woods almost anywhere from Maine to California. It was a clue but a slim one.

Then Leonard had an idea. He was something of a woodsman and through his position with the state had contacts with the conservation department that he felt would be useful now.

"Give me that picture," he said, "and you fellows go on with the other angles until I get back. I think I've got a lead."

On Saturday morning Leonard called Collins on the phone after a session in the offices of the conservation department in Lansing. "Let me have a man who can go north with Ochs and me. I think we can spot that cabin right here in Michigan!"

Collins immediately assigned Schouw to the trip.

At 11 o'clock Captain Joseph Kearney, commander of the Bay City area of the state police, heard the voice of Captain Leonard on the telephone.

"Will you get in touch with the sheriff up in Iosco county and have him locate a conservation officer by the name of Arthur Leitz? Get a couple of our men

ready if you can. We've got a big job on. Ochs and I'll be up about 2:30. Tell the sheriff to stand by with Leitz until we call them back."

Wires began humming out of Bay City, located about half the distance of the 200 miles up the Lake Huron shore from Detroit to Tawas City, seat of Iosco county. Sheriff Charles Miller agreed to locate Leitz. At the West Branch post of the state police in Ogemaw county, Corporal Hiram Grimeson heard orders to depart with two troopers for Standish and await further instructions there.

Promptly at 2:30, Leonard, Ochs and Schouw arrived in Bay City. They met Kearney, then picked up Grimeson and Troopers Carl Seim and Harry Collins with another car at Standish. A short time later Sheriff Miller and Leitz, having received their instructions from Bay City, joined the group at a crossroad between Tawas City and West Branch.

### On The Killers' Trail

**T**HE afternoon was growing late. Leonard wasted no time. Pulling from his pocket the picture of the cabin in the woods, he handed it to Leitz.

"Take a good look at that and tell me it you have any idea where it is. Up at Lansing they told me it was a good bet it would be around Iosco county and that you could spot it if anybody in the state of Michigan could!"

There was a moment of anxious suspense as Leitz gazed steadily at the snapshot, turned it at different angles. Sheriff Miller, looking over his shoulder, shook his head slowly. Leonard looked worried.

Suddenly Leitz brightened. He looked up at Leonard.

"Yes, I believe I *can* show you where it is. It's an ordinary cabin, but there's something about the trees and the lay of the land . . ."

Quickly the men piled into their cars and drove through Hale, a tiny town to the north, then turned off on a winding road which finally led to the famed Au Sable river. Following the river's course through nearly 10 miles of unbroken wilderness, they halted suddenly. Leitz, in the lead car, pointed to a narrow trail to the left. Beside it a sign pointed through the woods: "Cook

[Continued on page 67]



# The Case of the BLONDE PLAYGIRL

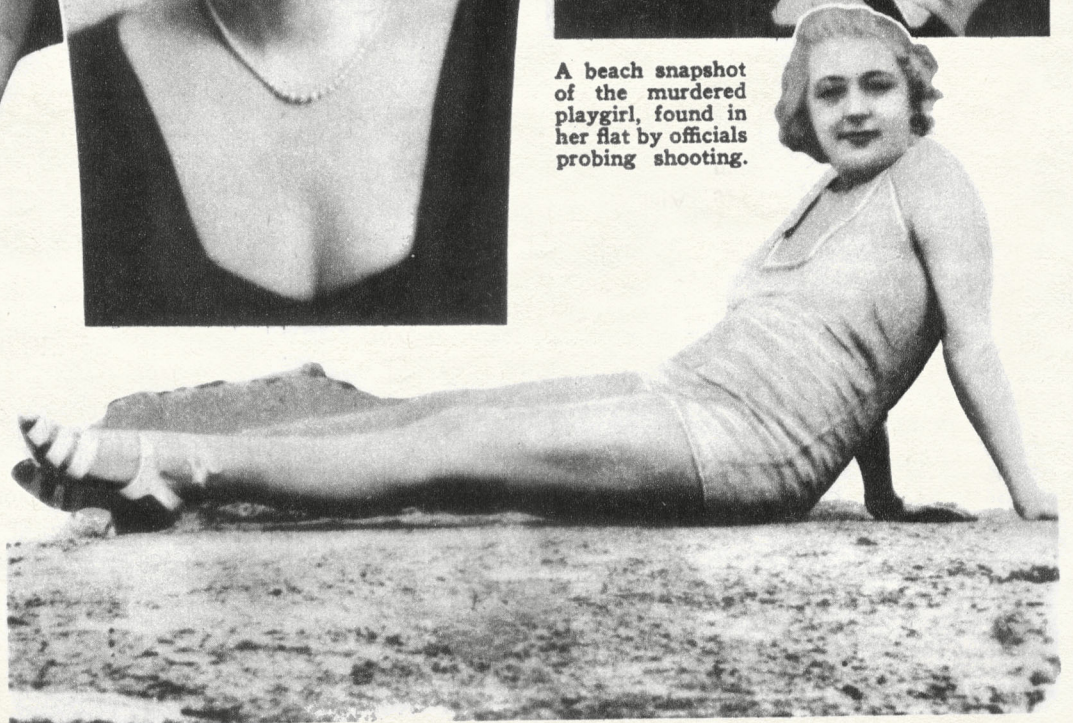
*"I wish I could die," wrote a beautiful but disillusioned Chicago playgirl.*

*She got her wish when an assailant shot her to death in a mystery slaying.*

A striking blonde of unusual beauty, Audrye Vallette, also known as Annabelle Blake, was a well-known figure in the Chicago bright light sector. But her butterfly career was ended in a sensational manner when a mysterious assassin sent a bullet crashing into her head in a North Side apartment. Photos show the slain beauty in formal and informal poses.



A beach snapshot of the murdered playgirl, found in her flat by officials probing shooting.





# Love Secrets of California's Rattlesnake Romeo

[Continued from page 15]

The human ferret! I'd all but forgotten the fishpond drowning. But inspectors and elephants, it seems, never forget.

The insurance officials were glad to see me. They had cause for worry. As I told the chief, they had no alternative but to pay the policy on the life of Mary James after the corner's jury had officially decreed the death an accident. In fact, they had drawn a check for \$10,000 in favor of Robert James. The morning the check was to go out in the mail, however, a letter was delivered to the company. It was a strange, anonymous epistle in a woman's handwriting. On the strength of that letter, delivery of the check to James was stopped.

They showed me the letter. It was a long, rambling account of vague accusations, of suggestions that something was wrong with the death of Mary James. There was a hazy description of a "hot party" in a hotel room at Hermosa Beach, of a man's brutal treatment of his light o' love for the evening.

It didn't make sense to me. "That's what we thought too, at first," an insurance official told me. "But we've done a little checking on the matter. We believe we have identified the writer of this letter, although we haven't been able to locate her. She's a girl by the name of Madge Reed. And we know that a girl by that name registered at a hotel in Hermosa Beach with Robert James less than a week after his wife's death in La Canada."

My mind flashed back to the illicit relations between James and his wife, Mary, before they were legally married.

"Suppose you let me check up on this," I suggested. "How much time have you got before the case is called for trial?"

"Less than a week. You'll have to work fast, if you're going to save us any money. We were taking a blind chance on this letter when we decided to contest the policy but as matters stand we have very little chance of beating the case unless something turns up in a hurry."

"I'll do my best," I promised.

It took me two days to find the anonymous letter writer. It was a tedious task of running down leads, of doubling back over the trail, checking on names and telephone numbers.

## An Interesting Story

MADGE REED was a willing talker. She was also an exceedingly handsome woman, dark-eyed, sophisticated and stunningly dressed. She admitted she had fallen for the dashing, red-headed barber, although at the time of the hotel incident she did not know that he was a heartbroken widower of a few days.

"Sure, I had a party with him at the hotel," she admitted. "But that guy is a devil. He's got a swell line, but he can be the meanest guy in the world. He—"

I interrupted. I was far more interested in the details of what prompted her letter to the insurance company. As diplomatically as I could, I steered the conversation pertaining to the sadistic nature of the barber to the other matter.

"You wrote a letter, didn't you, to the insurance company?"

"Sure, I wrote it. I wanted to square accounts with that guy. And I've got something on him, too!"

"About what?"

"About the drowning of his wife in La Canada."

I tried to conceal the sudden excitement stirring within me as she paused to let the full significance of her statement register.

"Tell me about it, Miss Reed."

"Well, in the first place, he was afraid he was going to have trouble collecting the insurance. Said that he'd have to prove his wife was drowned after he left for work that morning."

"And did he tell you he *hadn't* left for work before his wife drowned?" I interrupted.

"Well, not exactly," she said, "but he was awfully anxious to have somebody prove that he *wasn't* there when she died. I just figured it out for myself. He said that if a letter to his wife's sister had been mailed everything would have been all right. I don't know what he meant by that but I do know that he offered me a grand."

"A thousand dollars! For what?"

"For an alibi."

"What sort of an alibi?"

"Well, he said if I'd go into court and swear that I'd seen his wife alive after 9 o'clock in the morning, so that he could collect the insurance without any more trouble, he'd give me a grand."

"What did you say?"

"I told him nothing doing. I'm not getting mixed up in any funny business with the court."

## Insurance Company Settles

MADGE REED was a voluble and willing talker but beyond what I have told there was nothing else she could offer that would be of any help. In fact, I realized that in view of her affair with James, there was small likelihood that any jury would place much credence in her testimony. Obviously she was seeking revenge against the barber but for what reason I was not sure, unless it concerned her dark hints of James' abnormal behavior while they were registered at the Hermosa Beach hotel. As a matter of fact, Madge Reed was not called as a witness by the insurance company. The officials finally arranged an out-of-court settlement for the policy on Mary James'



Lois Wright, an important figure in the fishpond investigation, looks on with interest as Captain E. E. Kynette shows her the location of a dictaphone concealed in the James bungalow.



death. The husband collected about a third of the full amount provided in the two policies.

Meanwhile Madge Reed had opened up a case for me that I had virtually abandoned. True, she had supplied no information pointing to guilt of murder but she had definitely convinced me that James was a man who would bear investigating from every angle. The first thing I did was to dig up that letter Mary James had left on the table the day she died.

A handwriting expert, to whom I took the scrawling note, said he believed the hand which wrote it had been guided by another. "But I'd have to have a sample of the woman's writing before I could be positive," he said.

From the dead woman's sister, Mrs. R. H. Stewart in Las Vegas, Nev., I obtained excellent specimens of Mary James' handwriting. The expert compared them with the scrawling death note.

"It is quite obvious that a stronger and steadier hand guided the pen of the writer of this letter," he said.

But what did that prove? And of what use could I put the sensational story Madge Reed had told me? I had a long talk with Inspector Stensland.

"There's only one thing to do," he said after we'd gone over the whole case from beginning to end. "Go out and get the complete history of this man. Find out where he came from, what he did. Don't pass up anything. In the meantime I'll put Killion on this end and we'll keep a tail on him day and night." Killion—Deputy Sheriff Willard Killion—is one of the homicide detail's most efficient operatives and we have worked together as a team on many big cases. Inspector Stensland continued: "Get a full account of the death of James' first wife in Colorado. Find out if he collected any insurance on her. I've got a hunch we're going to blast this case wide open. We'll get the district attorney's office and the police department to work with us. Hop to it, Gray."

### Finds Deadly Parallel

I STARTED out by picking up the trail which led into Colorado. And when I assembled the details of the death of Mrs. Winona Wallace James in a bathtub at an auto camp in Manitou, it was a strange account.

Driving into Colorado after a trip across the country from Birmingham, Ala., James and his first wife had an auto accident on the side of Pike's Peak, September 22, 1932. That is, Mrs. James had the accident, according to the report on file with the Colorado officials. Their car had plunged off the road and over an embankment. James had jumped clear as the car went over.

Mrs. James sustained a deep gash on the top of her head and for more than a week hovered between life and death in the hospital. But finally she recovered and the Jameses moved into the Manitou auto camp. A few days later, while James was in town buying groceries, Mrs. James had fainted and fallen into a bathtub. She was found drowned on his return to the camp.

There was a deadly parallel between that tragedy and the accidental drowning of the second wife in the fishpond, nearly four years later, according to the explanation James offered to the coroner's jury which heard the evidence in the Manitou death. "The cut on her head from the auto accident had made her subject to

dizzy spells," James had testified. "I think she must have had one of those spells when she fell into the bathtub."

I discovered still another peculiar parallel between the two wives' accidental drownings. In La Canada, James was accompanied by two persons—James Pemberton and Viola Lueck—when Mary James' body was found in the fishpond. In Manitou, James was accompanied by a grocer's delivery boy when Winona James was discovered dead in the bathtub.

Thus, in both instances, the deaths were discovered by the husband, but each time in the presence of witnesses!

Somehow, as I turned my attention to the next phase of my investigation, I knew the answer in advance. Mrs. Winona James had been insured by two policies for \$14,000, which James collected.

### A Peculiar Auto Accident

THE information on file with the authorities concerning the details of the auto accident was fragmentary and did not piece together a story clear enough for my liking. I went after some firsthand information, which was supplied by J. A. Rogers, superintendent of Pike's Peak highway.

Mr. Rogers said that James reported the accident to him after the car plunged off the road. "Winnie was driving up the mountain while I looked at the scenery through a pair of binoculars," Mr. Rogers said James told him. "All at once the car swerved and I jumped just as it went over the side. There wasn't anything I could do to help Winnie."

Superintendent Rogers was an observant man. He recalled that the clothing of the dapper barber was neat and unsoiled. This seemed strange to him after the wild leap James must have made to escape with his life from the plunging car.

"There were a lot of peculiar things about that accident," Superintendent Rogers said. "If Mrs. James had died I

would have brought them to the attention of the officials. But she didn't, of course, and naturally there was nothing I could do."

"Just what were some of the peculiarities of the accident, Mr. Rogers?"

"Well, I thought it was rather queer that James should be looking at the scenery through a pair of binoculars while his wife did the driving."

"What's queer about a thing like that?"

"Ordinarily, nothing. But it was almost dark when the accident happened!"

"Anything else?"

"Well, when we took Mrs. James from the car at the bottom of the incline, I noticed a hammer on the floor of the car in the front. There was some blood on it, although, of course, blood could have splashed on it from the cut in her head after the accident.

"Then I went back and examined the tracks with a flashlight," he continued. "It seemed to me that there were footprints alongside the tire marks just where the car went off the road—"

"As if somebody had been pushing the car?"

"I'm not saying that's the way it happened," he said, but I suspected Superintendent Rogers had his private opinion of the affair.

The amorous nature of the marrying barber was further revealed after I located slender Grace Yarnell in Colorado Springs. She was a cousin of the late Mrs. Winona James and during the latter's stay in the Colorado Springs hospital after the auto accident had been a constant visitor at her bedside.

During the course of our conversation I sensed that the young woman nursed a feeling of dislike for her cousin's husband. By careful questioning I discovered the reason for this dislike.

"He made advances toward me," Miss Yarnell finally said. "Twice while I was driving him to the hospital to see Winnie. He kissed me but they were not the kisses of a relative. I objected both times and then, when he tried to kiss me in his hotel room, I told him to cut it out. He's an awful beast."

### Sets Up Love Nest

BACK in Los Angeles, meanwhile, a new and sensational development had occurred in the affairs of Robert S. James, master barber and Casanova extraordinary.

Deputy Killion had picked up the trail of the man and it led to a vine-covered bungalow on South La Salle avenue. "Mr. and Mrs. Robert James" was the inscription on the doorplate.

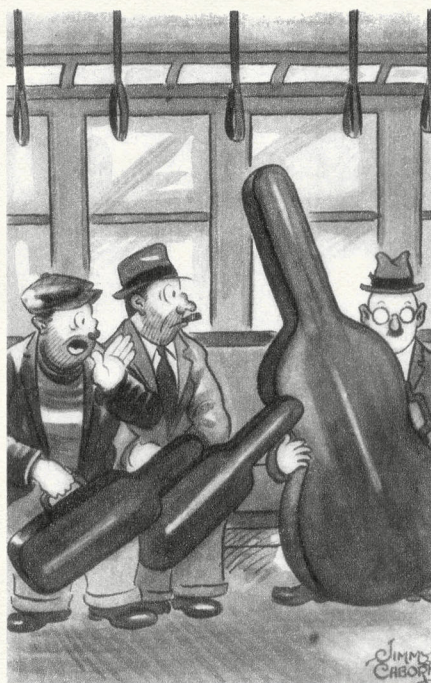
Killion traced the identity of Mrs. James. She was Lois Wright, dazzlingly beautiful 21-year-old girl from Birmingham, Ala.

And the daughter of Robert James' sister!

It was an open and shut case of incest and it would have been a simple matter for Deputy Killion to arrest both under the morals statutes. But my partner played a far shrewder game. He notified the district attorney's office.

"We can always make a pinch on the incest charge," Killion pointed out, "but I've got a better idea. Gray is working on the murder angle and he's got a lot of hot stuff. Why not put a dictaphone in the place and listen in for a while? Maybe James will drop a word here and there that may prove interesting."

The district attorney agreed to the plan. Accordingly the vacant bungalow



"Get a load of dat guy! He must be packin' one of dem anti-aircraft guns!"



adjoining the love retreat of "Mr. and Mrs. James" suddenly became occupied but none of the neighbors suspected the official status of the new tenants. During a period while the pair was away from their place, dictaphone wires were secretly installed between the two bungalows and stenographers were assigned in shifts to listen every minute of the day and night.

While this was going on I was following the trail of James' past life. No biography penned by a Rabelais could have been half so bizarre, so sensually grotesque as the career of Major Lisenba, the name under which James was born.

He had been arrested no less than 22 times for offenses involving women. These arrests stretched across the police blotters of the nation, because Robert James, as he chose to be known, was quite a traveler. During this time, covering a period of about fifteen years, James had been married five times!

Winona Wallace James, who drowned in Manitou, had been his third wife. Mary Busch James, who drowned in La Canada, had been his fifth.

The final police account of James and his illicit loves was recorded on the Birmingham blotter early in 1935, about three months before he married the manicurist in his Los Angeles barber-shop—Mary Busch. The girl named with James in the Birmingham warrant charging violation of the morals statutes of Alabama was Lois Wright, the niece now living as "Mrs. James" in the bungalow on La Salle avenue in Los Angeles.

I searched for the three surviving wives of the much-married barber. I could find only one, Vera Vermillion James, who had been Mrs. Robert S. James No. 2.

Blonde, pretty and witty, she told of the seven years she had lived with James. She described her ex-husband as a man of great charm and apparently she was happy with him for a long time. Under persistent questioning, however, she admitted that their final parting had been caused by James' insatiable desire for women.

"A pretty woman could always turn his head," she said.

While admitting her former husband was possessed of a violent temper, she said he was not cruel nor had he ever displayed any unnatural desire for money. He never spoke of insurance, she added.

"But his weakness was women," she added. "Bob James simply couldn't leave other women alone, so I divorced him."

#### Raid Love Bungalow

I RETURNED to Los Angeles the day before the scheduled raid on the La Salle avenue bungalow. After three weeks of listening to the nightly conversations between James and his enamored niece, Killion and the district attorney had decided there was nothing to be learned about the La Canada drowning. But they had gathered sufficient evidence to convict James and his niece a dozen times over for incest.

"Didn't he ever mention his wife's death?" I asked Killion.

"Several times. Apparently the niece knew all about it but I'm convinced she believes what the rest of the world does—that it was an accidental drowning. There's only one thing in this stuff—" he indicated the voluminous stack of transcript containing the nightly conversations between James and his mistress—"that

isn't clear. Almost every time they talked about the drowning in La Canada, they mentioned a woman's name—a Viola Somebody."

"You can cross that off," I replied. "That's Viola Lueck, or rather it's Mrs. Viola Pemberton now. She and the man who later became her husband were with James the night they found the body in the fishpond. They know absolutely nothing beyond what they've already told us. You see, James always makes it a point to have a witness around when one of his wives is found dead." (Later developments proved the absolute accuracy of these statements.)

There was little mirth in my attempt at grim humor. And there was little comfort in the nine months of effort I'd expended on the case as far as a solution to the fishpond drowning was concerned. Not a scrap of tangible evidence could be used in a courtroom, and nobody knew that better than I.



Grace Yarnell, cousin of James' first wife, Winona Wallace James, told Deputy Gray an astounding story,

The district attorney's men staged the raid on the bungalow. James blustered and Lois Wright wept but both were bundled out of their bed, into some clothes and down to the jail. The girl was terrified; but James, a veteran of morals raids, lapsed into a sullen silence.

That night I sat for hours with Inspector Stensland. I spread out the results of nine weary months of investigation.

After studying the fruits of my labors, the chief rewarded me with one of his rare compliments.

"You've done a very thorough job on this!" he said. "But the all-important thing lacking is proof of foul play. This

stuff might be of value to the district attorney when he asks for incest indictments against James and that Wright girl but I'd hate like blazes to ask any grand jury for a murder indictment on the fishpond thing. I don't say you haven't done your best and I don't deny you have done a good job of turning over every stone in this Romeo's past. Of course, there is always the possibility we are all wrong. It may have been an accident—two accidents, in fact. But we can't stop until we give James a clean bill of health—or bust this case wide open. We've got to find a break if there's a break to be found."

"I could build up a better case in Colorado against James on the evidence the Pike's Peak highway superintendent furnished," I said gloomily.

"Our job is the La Canada drowning," he reminded me. "I agree with you that there is a close parallel between the drownings of his two wives but we've got to concentrate on this one."

#### Million Dollar Tip

THE telephone rang. The chief answered.

A curious expression crossed his features as he listened for perhaps three minutes. He replaced the receiver.

"Gray," he said slowly, "I think the break is coming. That was the district attorney's office. They just got a tip that looks like a million dollars."

"Go on," I said excitedly.

"Just a minute," he said, drawing an official form from his desk. He unscrewed the cap from his fountain pen and I waited while he filled in the blank spaces on the printed form.

"For the love of Pete," I cried, "what's this all about? What are you doing with that sheet?"

"This," said Inspector Stensland with devastating calm, "is an application for an order to have the body of Mary James exhumed. I'm beginning to think that you haven't been working for nothing after all!"

"Then James did—" I began.

"For the time being," the chief said, "James is out of the picture. And in or out, we know he is where he'll be safe for a while in case we want him. There's a new face in the picture."

"But what has all this got to do with exhuming Mary James?" I cried.

"Merely to check up on a point that was overlooked in the beginning," he said. "But I'll tell you all about it on the way down."

"Down where?"

"You and I," said Inspector Stensland, "are going down to Hermosa Beach. We're going to have a little talk with—"

**What was the nature of Inspector Stensland's "million dollar tip"? Who is this new figure in the bizarre case? Will the Hermosa Beach trip break the mystery? Read the sensational answers to these questions in the next installment of this incredible story in the November issue of *Startling Detective Adventures*, on sale at all newsstands September 29.**



# The Fatal Tryst of Indiana's "Joy Club" Queen

[Continued from page 20]

Sergeant Dugan determined to have another try at questioning the wounded man. Almost two weeks had elapsed since the fatal night and the man had had considerable time to recover his speech and strength. This time Chapman was able to give an account of the shooting.

"We drove into the garage on Saturday night after dark," said Chapman. "I turned off the switch and the lights and got out of the car to go around on the other side and help Grace out. As I stood with one foot on the running board and the other on the floor I heard a shot and Grace screamed. Then I heard another shot and everything went black. That is all I remember until I came to in the hospital. I don't know who it was unless it was someone who planned to rob us."

No amount of questioning could elicit any additional details from the man and Dugan returned to his office to study the case. I met him there and together we went over every angle of the mystery. Jealousy, we figured, might have motivated the double attack; but we had been unable to locate a suspect. The idea of murder for gain was not tenable unless we could find someone who did not know about Chapman's financial condition. That left only two possibilities—robbery or the fact that Chapman might have become desperate over his straitened financial affairs and carried out the double shooting himself.

But there were pronounced flaws in these last two theories. If the pair had been shot by a bandit how could the marauder have visited the garage without leaving footprints in the snow? And similarly, if Chapman had plotted the crime, how had he avoided leaving telltale tracks when he had padlocked the garage doors? How had the weapon been concealed after the shots were fired? Who had written the supposed suicide note? We were no farther along than we had been when the bodies were first discovered.

Sergeant Dugan was discussing the case with Deputy Sheriff Louis Mikesell when we received our first break. Mikesell had been out of the city for some time and listened attentively as Dugan sketched the details of the shooting mystery.

"You know," said Mikesell slowly, "I think I know that man. Didn't he sell a line of soaps and spices to the stores?"

"Yes, he did," said Dugan. "He was retired but followed that as a sideline or hobby." He described Chapman in considerable detail.

"That's the man," answered Mikesell. "I was at his house on Carson road once and he showed me a small automatic pistol and boasted about how good a shot he was."

"Would you know the gun?" asked Dugan eagerly.

"I'm pretty sure I would," Mikesell replied. "I put the number down in my notebook, intending to check it with the record to see if he had a permit to carry it or not."

Shown the death gun, Mikesell readily identified it as Chapman's property. Armed with this information Dugan sought out Chapman. He had a hunch and was determined to play it.

In the hospital in the Marion county jail he questioned Chapman. Carefully he drew the man out, asking inconsequential questions about the tragedy. Finally he showed him the gun and asked Chapman to identify it, telling him that it had been found on a suspect.

Without emotion Chapman identified the weapon. "That is my gun," he said. "I lost it a few weeks ago."

Dugan pounced upon the admission. His hunch was growing stronger. He decided upon a bold stroke.

"That gun was found in your car the day after the murder," he said accusingly. "You killed Grace Lackey and then shot yourself. You were worried about your financial affairs and afraid that you would lose her. You decided upon murder and suicide as the best way out."

## Slayer Confesses To Crime

TENSELY Dugan sat back to study the effect of his words. Chapman muttered a protest but his words failed to carry conviction. It was readily apparent that the man was under a severe physical and mental strain.

Dugan pressed his advantage relentlessly. He bombarded Chapman with questions. The man's protests grew weaker. His eyes rolled wildly and his jaw sagged in hopeless fashion. Finally his last vestige of resistance was shattered and he began to pour out his story through quivering lips.

"Yes, I killed Grace. We had been quarreling about the car. She had been trying to get it away from me. I made her get ready, saying that we were going to town. As I started to get into the car I shot her. Then I went out on the back porch. The wind had blown the snow off the stone wall of the driveway and I climbed down, keeping to the spots where the stones were bare. I locked the garage door and then went back to the kitchen and printed the note and left it on the kitchen table. I used to be clever

with a pencil and could disguise my handwriting so that no one could tell whose it was. After printing the note I locked all the doors and windows, then went back to the basement and shot myself."

As the man talked, Dugan had been taking down his statement. At the conclusion of the confession he offered it to Chapman who signed it with an evident air of relief.

Following this sensational break in the case, Chapman's fingerprints were taken for comparison with the bloody thumbprint found on the garage door. The prints tallied exactly. Next we checked into Chapman's record. From the United States bureau of identification we learned that he had served a term on the state farm, following his conviction as a "peeping Tom."

When Chapman's confession was made public a storm of protests arose from his friends. There were hints that his statement had not been made voluntarily—rumors that he had become mentally unbalanced as a result of his wound. These developments were climaxed by Chapman's repudiation of his confession. He alleged that it had been made under duress.

Meanwhile Herbert M. Spencer had succeeded Prosecutor Wilson and I was appointed one of his assistants. Despite the fact that the case against Chapman was highly circumstantial I began to prepare for trial.

On January 29, 1935, Charles W. Chapman went before Special Judge Clyde H. Karrer in Marion county criminal court charged with the murder of his sweetheart, Grace Lackey. The opening statement was made by my chief, Herbert M. Spencer, and after the jury had visited the scene of the slaying the taking of evidence began.

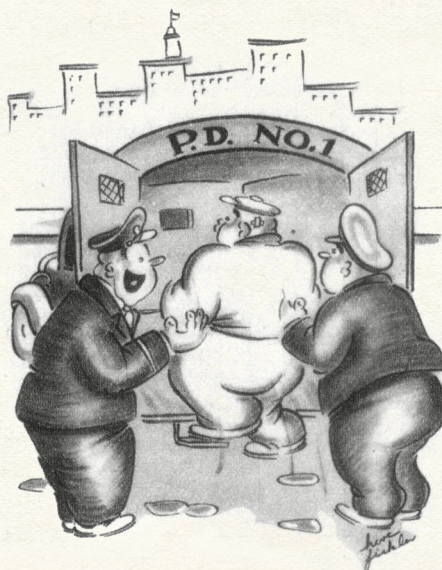
We knew that we would have a fight on our hands to secure a conviction. Even after a special sanity commission, composed of Doctors Robert Howell and Clyde Landis, both of the city hospital, had pronounced Chapman sane, I was making little progress. It was not until Mrs. Elizabeth Killion, friend of the slain woman began to testify that we began to weave a net around the middle-aged Casanova.

"I knew Grace liked him at first," she said, "but later he became mean and threatening and she was afraid of him. He was always very jealous of her."

"I hid Grace in my home several times when he was looking for her with a gun. I heard him tell her many times that if she ever turned him down he would kill her!"

I was elated. At last we had established a definite motive for murder. The rest of the trial was merely routine. Chapman was found guilty and was sentenced to life imprisonment in the state penitentiary at Michigan City.

How Chapman managed to conceal the gun after he had shot himself remained a mystery. He either did not remember or would not explain it. But we of the prosecutor's staff were satisfied. A brutal killer had been punished and we had cleared up the mystery of that fatal night when a bullet dethroned the queen of the Joy Club.



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Every normal being is susceptible to love's tender passion. When love comes the lovers realize how inadequate is the language at their command to express the depths of the consuming passion that is gnawing at their hearts. It is to soothe the souls of the love-lorn that this work has been compiled. Read this work and profit. Price 10c postpaid. Big novelty catalog 10 cents.





### NEVER!

(San Quentin Prison Bulletin)

Never while lilacs bloom in the spring,  
Never while orioles gayly sing  
And patches of poppies, scattered gold,  
Lift yellow heads so saucy and bold,  
Opening their petals when sweetly kissed,  
By the cool fresh dew of the morning's mist.

Never while swallows build nests in the eaves  
Among wind-blown splendor of dancing leaves,  
Where lupine is blue, and thistles spill  
Their soft downy hearts against the hill  
That turns to purple at eventide,  
Enclosing in serenity its fragrant side.

Never while Nature spatters the earth  
With color and song, and gives new birth  
To bursting buds and thin blades of grass,  
And fleecy white clouds lazily pass  
Through the ocean of heaven-spreading blue,  
Will I cease to feel the thrill anew  
Of the flowering love and ecstasy  
That came on the wings of spring to me.  
—J. W.

### SHADOWS

(San Quentin Prison Bulletin)

Grotesque shadows on the wall  
Are keeping me from sleep—  
Nor can I find one familiar object  
Patterned in black  
Against the white  
Of a barren wall.

Here, by my hand, on the window frame  
Is a peculiar looking species  
Of a long legged bird  
With a tiny breast,  
And a long sharp beak  
That seems to peck . . .  
Incessantly . . .  
Frighteningly!

I look out into the night  
To find some cause for this creature,  
And there by my window,  
Is a single leaf  
On an autumn stripped tree.  
A tiny leaf  
Rehearsing in the breeze,  
To come back and dance  
On the window frame  
For me!

—B. W.

### SILENCE

(San Quentin Prison Bulletin)

Silence—  
The silence of ages;  
Silence—  
The Golden Rule;  
Silence—  
Appalling silence—  
Broken only by a fool!

—R. U.

## The Mystery of the Slain Wife

[Continued from page 25]

attended the Presbyterian Church Sunday night and had later called at the home of E. O. McGee on business. But the suspect offered such a strong alibi of his actions thereafter that he was finally released on heavy bond.

After lunch, I returned to the McCue home and made a thorough and systematic examination of the upper rooms and the hall in an effort to reconstruct the crime. I was soon satisfied that the society matron had been first attacked in her bedroom, brutally beaten, then dragged down the hall and thrown into the tub. As a final gesture of assurance that life was extinct, the heartless slayer had then held the gun close to her breast and pulled the trigger. Why the water had been turned on I was never able to explain.

Returning to the lower floor, I passed through the door leading into the daughter's room and casually strolled over to the window. It was open, just as it had been the night before, when the dazed husband had seen the mysterious killer leap through it. For some moments I stood before the window gazing into the bright noonday sun outside.

### The Spider's Web

DOWN through an extensively planned garden ran a winding pergola, its rustic frame covered with rose bushes. I suddenly realized that my view of the garden was somewhat hazy. Was it my eyes? Were they failing me? I closed them, rubbed them vigorously, and looked again. There was an obstruction, a thin, filmy formation suspended between the wooden frames of the window and extending diagonally across the aperture—the intricate web of a garden spider.

The spinning of a spider web has always fascinated me. However hideous and abhorrent to the eye the little creature may be, he is, nevertheless, an expert architect and a tireless workman. And how artistic and perfectly constructed is his finished product! A circular network of strongly woven threads, each strand evenly spaced and securely fastened to a radiating framework of countless guy lines!

I examined the web before me closely. Not a single skein of that silken structure was broken. An invisible net stretched across that open window by a master craftsman to snare unsuspecting prey!

Suddenly seized with an idea, I wheeled from the window and hastened across the hall into the spacious, well-equipped library. From the paneled wall I removed a volume of an encyclopedia and sought a quiet chair in the corner of the room. With the avidity of some ancient scholar poring over his scrolls, I devoured the two full pages devoted to the life and habits of garden spiders.

Several sentences interested me keenly—"The garden spider is very cunning . . . weaves its web in the early dusk of evening . . . lies in wait for its prey." I reread those lines several times, then returned the book to its proper place on the shelf.

The death-shrouded home was rapidly filling with sympathetic friends as I

emerged from the library. To escape these prying eyes, I retired to the rear of the house and mingled with the servants. The negro domestics were reluctant to discuss the murder with me and refused to disclose any information concerning the private life of their "white folks."

### A Possible Motive?

DESCENDING the steps to the cellar, I encountered an eighteen-year-old negro house boy and engaged him in conversation. He slept in the attic at the rear of the house. He had heard the shot the night before, but a locked door prevented him from entering the main part of the home. The timid negro lad was revealing to me how he had carried notes for years between his master and certain women in the city, when interrupted by the entrance of Willie McCue.

For the first time I heard details of the events preceding the tragedy from the lips of the victim's son.

"Mother had been visiting friends in Red Hill," he said. "Father was in West Virginia on business. Yesterday morning he sent me a special delivery letter from Washington, saying he would not return until today. Mother returned yesterday afternoon and, when I told her of the letter, she became furious and said something about father staying up there to see 'that woman'."

"But your father did return last evening?" I asked.

"Yes," replied the son, "on the six o'clock train. My parents had a slight argument at the supper table as to where father had been, but it soon blew over. I went downtown and did not return until I heard the news on the street."

It was four o'clock that afternoon when I sent word to Mr. McCue that I wished to see him privately. Behind closed doors in his study, I informed him I was forced to resign from his services.

McCue was momentarily stunned. His

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THE EDITOR

**STARTLING DETECTIVE  
ADVENTURES**

**22 W. Putnam, Greenwich, Conn.**



mouth widened fish-like, while his big brown eyes narrowed into mere pin points. "See here, Baldwin," he exclaimed, "you can't run out on me like this. My wife's murderer must be caught."

"Please understand," I explained, "that I am not withdrawing from the case. To further the ends of justice and comply with your urgent desire, I think it best not to remain in your direct employ."

"Have it your way," agreed McCue, finally. "At least, I am glad to know you are not leaving. I have implicit confidence in your ability, Baldwin, and believe you will succeed."

I thanked him and, in almost the same breath, asked, "Was the front door locked last night when you retired?"

"No," he replied, "it was purposely left unlocked for Willie, who was out."

"I was wondering," I continued, "why the intruder, who, by the way, evidently was familiar with the arrangement of the home, did not leave by the front door instead of taking a chance on a window being open in your daughter's room."

"He must have entered through the window," promptly suggested McCue. "Naturally, he would leave the same way."

"You are positive he escaped through it?" I asked.

"Absolutely," came his unhesitating reply.

During my short walk back to my hotel, those lines I had read in the library kept revolving in my head—"The garden spider is very cunning . . . weaves its web in the early dusk of evening . . . lies in wait for its prey." I was convinced that that delicate structure, with not a single strand broken, had snared its prey—not an innocent fly this time, but a shrewd, diabolical murderer. But such fanciful deductions would be futile before a jury of twelve men. Could I possibly prove them, make them irrefutable? I wondered.

#### Victim's Brother Testifies

**F**UNERAL services for Fannie Crawford McCue were held on the afternoon of Tuesday, September 6, 1904. Business houses closed their doors and the city turned out en masse to pay homage to the slain society matron. While the cortege moved slowly through the streets between lines of bared heads, a scene discordant with the hallowed afternoon was being enacted in another part of the city.

In a crowded room on the second floor of the municipal building, a coroner's jury remained in session, endeavoring to place the finger of guilt on the person or persons responsible for the crime. Men sat with bated breath as they listened to sensational evidence emanating from the lips of the dead woman's youngest brother, Ernest B. Crawford, a prominent attorney of Harrisonburg, Virginia, who had lived at the McCue home for three years while attending law school at the University of Virginia.

In virulent language, he told of unpleasant home relations and of McCue's numerous clandestine affairs with young married women of the city. When he had later approached his sister with the accusations, she had ridiculed him and refused to listen.

Continuing, the brother said he was calling his sister over the long distance telephone the Sunday night of the mur-

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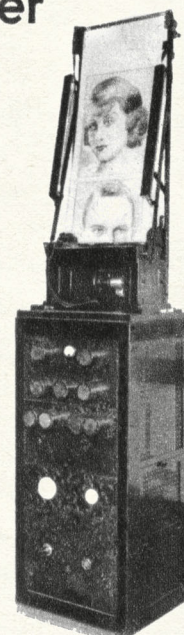


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**MODERN MECHANIX**  
HOBBIES AND INVENTIONS



der, when informed of her tragic death by Sam McCue. Terribly shocked he had asked for details and had been informed that she was investigating a noise in the rear of the house, carrying a cat rifle, when attacked by an unknown assailant, who had disarmed her and shot her.

"I slammed the receiver in disgust," the young attorney said. "I knew my sister was too timid to touch a gun of any description. I came over here to unravel this thing, to probe it. That's why I am not at her funeral this afternoon. I deemed my duty here."

"Gentlemen, I put in that long distance call last Sunday night at exactly one minute after nine to get the cheaper rate. In less than a minute I was listening to the story of my sister's death. Not until thirteen minutes later did he telephone Mrs. Williams. I am now convinced that my sister had not been murdered when I called. But, at that very moment, Sam McCue was plotting her death, a plan that, for unknown reasons, necessitated certain changes from the one outlined to me over the phone."

The crowded room was stunned. Men's throats contracted and felt suddenly dry. Finally, one of the jurors asked:

"Mr. Crawford, granting your deductions correct, would not your sister have overheard any telephone conversation?"

"I presume she was in her room retiring for bed," the brother explained. "The telephone is in the study downstairs. It would have been impossible for her to have overheard the conversation, especially had the door been closed."

#### Arrest McCue

THE coroner's jury was still in session the following afternoon when police called at the Park street home, armed with a warrant for the arrest of J. Samuel McCue. The dignified former mayor maintained a stoical calm as he listened to the reading of the cutting words that accused him of the vilest of crimes, wife slaying.

His flaccid lips twitched but slightly, as he quietly remarked, "What a grave mistake has been made. But, by the grace of God, I'll come out all right. Do your duty, gentlemen."

Quietly, he was led away to the city jail, where a special room was assigned him and fitted with furniture from his home and fixtures from his office. Curtains hid the iron bars across the window. On top of the dresser rested two pictures—a group photo of the three children and a life-size portrait of the mother. Frequently, he stood and gazed into the cheerful faces, affectionately referring to them as "my darling wife and precious children."

The sudden and unexpected arrest of the distinguished citizen created almost as much excitement and indignation as the murder itself. Opinions were widely divided, a distinct line drawn between staunch friends and those willing to accept their fellow-townsmen as a cold-blooded death bargainer. Friends formed an armed guard about the jail to prevent violence. The two brothers employed Pinkerton detectives to find the actual murderer and vindicate the accused.

Realizing the necessity of a clearly established motive, we began an intensive search for the "woman in the case." But the deeper we probed, the more complicated and bewildering became the enigma. The "woman" became "women,"

and not only women in the home town and state, but women scattered throughout adjoining states.

The searchlight which had been turned on the former mayor's life was shifted into the dark unexplored nooks and corners of his past. A morbidly curious public became eager to delve into the depths of his life. Men in small groups discussed in hushed tones what they had known to be true for years. Rumors, even letters, drifted into the offices of Commonwealth's Attorney Frank Gilmer, disclosing new names. Oddly enough, each secretly interviewed woman admitted an infatuation for the 45-year-old romantic mayor and each thought he was showering his attentions upon her, and her alone.

In McCue's heavy mail one morning shortly after his incarceration, was an affectionate letter from a woman who signed herself "Hattie." A news item in the local paper regarding the mysterious writer promptly brought protests from a dozen different "Hatties," each of whom bitterly denied any connection with the written missives. Had a guilty conscience prompted their public display of indignation?

#### Asks Speedy Trial

NOT until Tuesday, September 27, was Samuel McCue arraigned in the corporation court of Charlottesville. And the prisoner was promptly remanded to jail, no move being made for his release on bond. Trial was set for Tuesday, October 18, the accused having requested that he be given a speedy trial in order to vindicate himself.

The prominence of the McCue family, backed by its vast financial resources, brought together six of the leading attorneys of the Old Dominion for his defense. Heading the formidable array was John L. Lee, of Lynchburg, the most famous criminal lawyer of the state and later conceded the most brilliant ex-

ponent of that branch of the law in the entire South.

Anticipating the bitter legal battle, hundreds of citizens signed a petition which was presented to Captain Micajah Woods, leading attorney of the local bar. It read:

"We, the undersigned citizens of Charlottesville and Albemarle county, believing that the name of our city and county may be compromised if the commonwealth's attorney is left without adequate aid in the prosecution of the person responsible for the recent terrible crime, appeal to you to afford to law and order the support of your talents, learning, and experience as a measure of security against possible popular resentment."

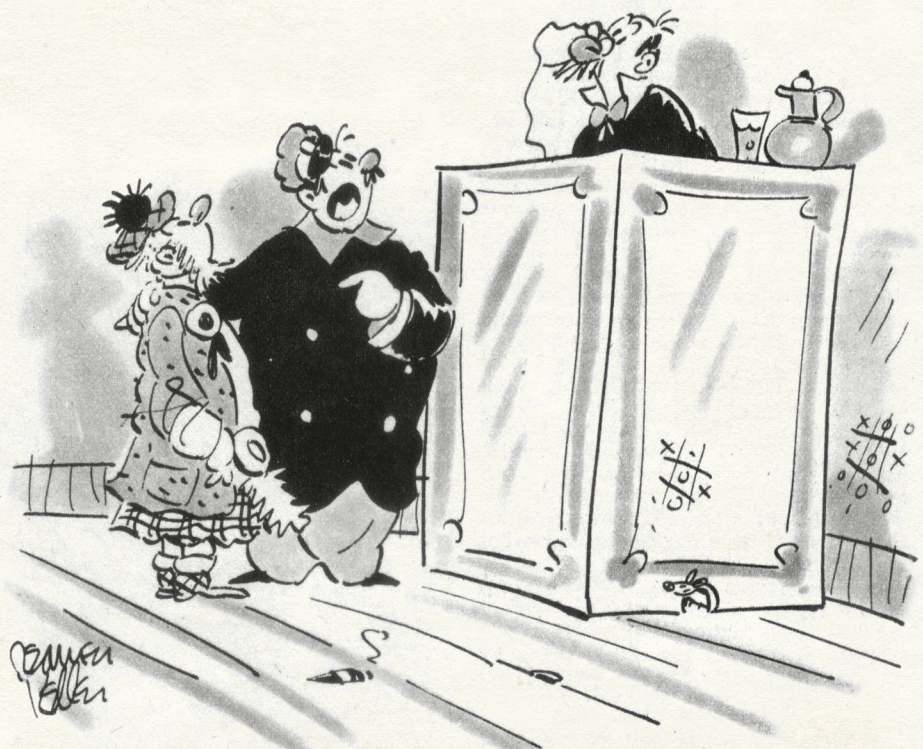
Captain Woods, a life-long friend and close associate of the accused man, accepted without compunction and without compensation.

So firmly fixed were opinions that not a single juror was obtainable from either city or county. After a week of examining hundreds of veniremen from other sections of the state, a satisfactory jury was finally obtained from Richmond, Petersburg, and Faqueir county.

The clang of the court bell on the morning of Wednesday, October 26, warned the populace that the actual trial of their distinguished citizen had begun. Nature had provided a beautiful day. The golden rays of an autumn sun, shimmering through the brown-tinted trees, seemed unusually warm and comforting. The air and sky belonged to midsummer. But the quaint little city was sorely troubled, deeply touched.

Unmindful of public opinion and the stare of curious eyes, McCue walked into the courtroom with confident air and swaggering stride and took his seat within the bar rail.

For days, through countless witnesses, the commonwealth built about the stoic figure a smooth, strong wall of circumstantial evidence. But the surprise wit-



"Almost every charge conceivable, your honor, except bribing an officer!"



ness was a young, attractive woman from Earlysville—Mrs. Hattie Evans. Courageously she sacrificed her future happiness in baring her relations with the attorney, to whom she had gone for legal aid in obtaining a divorce from her husband. Like many others, she had succumbed to the charms of the romantic lawyer.

"I was in Sam's office," stated the comely woman, "the day he left on his last trip. He told me that my husband had threatened him with violence unless he dropped the divorce proceedings. 'Should anything ever happen,' said Sam, 'we could easily blame him.'"

"I felt then that Mrs. McCue was going to be killed. I became frightened and immediately decided to give up the divorce and return to my husband. He and I were reunited and among friends the night of the murder. I wanted an alibi should my husband ever be accused of what I knew was going to happen."

Through scores of reputable citizens the defense endeavored to portray their client as a persecuted man. Testimony of the house servants pictured him as a loving husband, one who never entered or departed from the home without affectionately kissing his wife. But the tide was rapidly changing against the once beloved and respected man.

#### Guilty As Charged!

**THURSDAY**, November 5, 1904, was the wedding anniversary of the two socialites, Fannie Crawford and Samuel McCue. It was indeed ironical that, on that same day, the husband was found guilty of murdering his mate in cold blood and sentenced to death, the first death sentence ever imposed in Virginia upon a man of previous high standing.

Defense counsel immediately began preparations to save the doomed man from the gallows. Twice the state supreme court refused to grant a writ of error. Considerable feeling between the tribunal and the attorneys developed after the first refusal and, upon the second application, that body of jurists did something probably never done before nor since—it handed down a written opinion again refusing the writ of error.

Carried to the Supreme Court of the United States, the appeal was denied there. Mr. Justice Harlan writing the opinion. The doom of the convicted man was sealed when Governor Montague refused to intervene.

Promptly at 7 a. m., Friday, February 10, 1905, Sergeant John Rogers entered the doomed man's room in the city jail, the same room he had occupied from the day of his arrest. At the conclusion of

the reading of the death warrant, Sergeant Rogers asked:

"Now, Mr. McCue, do you think if I gave you my arm you would be able to walk to the scaffold?"

The shadow of a smile flickered across the pale lips of the prisoner. "John," he replied coolly, "I can walk there without your arm."

Down the rickety, creaking stairway out into the fresh air and the snow-covered jail yard the death party moved. At the foot of the scaffold it halted to permit the three ministers, who had sat up with the man facing death throughout the night, to extend a farewell handshake. No audible word was spoken.

Reaching the scaffold platform, the ghastly preparation began at once. McCue was placed with his feet upon the trap, his back to the assembled crowd. The guards advanced and began their work. The arms of the doomed man were pinioned behind him with handcuffs, the first he had ever worn. Ankles were strapped. The black gown was folded around him. The hempen noose was adjusted. The cowl dropped over his head. The hour of death had come.

Below, the crowd stood with bated breath, trying to master the shiver that ran over it. Sergeant Rogers suddenly turned his back to the crowd. He was now the only man on the scaffold with McCue, and the two men had been lifelong friends.

The unsteady hand of the police sergeant was poised high in the air. A white handkerchief, suddenly released, fluttered to the ground and the black-robed form of Samuel McCue shot downward. There was no sound, no rebound, no violent contortion of limbs. Only a slight muscular twitching and J. Samuel McCue, a condemned murderer, was dead.

Immediately after the execution, the late spiritual advisers of the doomed slayer gave the following statement to the press:

"J. Samuel McCue stated this morning in our presence and requested us to make public that he did not wish to leave this world with suspicion resting on any human being other than himself; that he alone is responsible for the deed, impelled to it by an evil power beyond his control; and that he recognized his sentence as just.

Signed:

George L. Petrie.

Harry B. Lee.

John B. Turpin.

Charlottesville, Va., Feb. 10, 1905."

(For the protection of innocent persons, the names, Jason Maxwell and Hattie Evans, used in this story, are not actual but fictitious.—The Editor.)

## The Clue of the Killers' Cabin

[Continued from page 57]

Dam." There was a hurried consultation. "We'll have to take it easy," Leitz warned. "It's only a matter of a couple of miles in here. Not quite to the dam."

The evening sun was sinking as the three cars crept forward, ghostly shadows in the gathering dusk. Only the occasional beam of a flashlight guided them along the snaking trail.

Then the lead car pulled to a halt. "This is as far as we'd better drive," Leitz whispered. "It's just ahead. We could see the cabin if the lights were on."

Quickly Leonard and Kearney divided their forces, laid plans for a surprise attack. For that matter there was no assurance that their quarry would be there. But they crept forward through the woods

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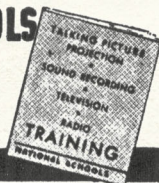
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with confidence. Ahead through the darkness a dim light appeared through a window. There was someone in the place!

With the others stationed at strategic points among the trees, Leonard and Schouw made for a door at the front while Kearney and Grimson crept to the rear. A shrill whistle sounded.

Both doors were thrown open simultaneously. Menacing pistols covered the interior as two wide-eyed youths leaped from a bed in one corner.

One was blond and wore a suede leather jacket. The other was dark, slim-faced with a long, prominent nose. Lieb and Maurer! The boys sought earlier as McCombie and Leslie.

They admitted their identity, and with rueful looks at guns standing behind both doors, made no denial of the fact that had they been warned they would have blasted down the first officer to enter the place. Lieb was 22 and Maurer 23.

"Sure," Lieb sneered. "You've got us dead to rights. We stuck up the joint where the milkman was killed. And we've stuck up plenty more joints, too."

Lodged over night in the jail at Tawas City, they had confessed before morning to a brief career of crime that included more than 20 holdups of gas stations and small stores. The last had been the looting of a drug store on East Jefferson avenue of \$225 just two nights before the fatal shooting of Marshall.

"We'd been on the trail of that slot machine collector for some time," Lieb admitted. "We figured it was getting late in the day and he'd have a good pile on him by the time he got to that bootleg joint. So we sat and waited. We knew he was coming. Of course we drank while we waited and got pretty tight, I guess. Then that milkman had to run out the door when we started things.

That's what upset the whole works."

On Monday the fourth and last member of the quartet was picked up in Detroit on a tip which came to Detective Sergeant James Brockney. He was Archie Burd, 22, readily identified as the dark-haired youth with the mustache.

### Murder Quartet Sentenced

A WEEK and a day after the murder of William Marshall, the four were turned over to authorities of Macomb county, the boundary line of which, just between St. Clair Shores and the Detroit city limits, gave them jurisdiction in the murder case. Circuit Judge Neil E. Reid pronounced immediate sentence of life in the Southern Michigan prison at Jackson against each of them.

Thus, within a few days of the Christmas holiday which gangland guns had saddened so completely for the little family of William Marshall, the books were closed on a case made outstanding in Michigan records through an ideal demonstration of inter-departmental cooperation.

Starting out to crack a case that was not actually their own, the Detroit police had been given active support by not only the state police and the police of suburban towns throughout the metropolitan area, but also the conservation department and the sheriffs of no less than a half dozen counties.

But in the final analysis it was the almost uncanny memory of Arthur Leitz, the conservation officer who knew his woods as few do, that supplied the final link in the chain of justice.

(To shield the identity of innocent persons, the names, Louis Drover and Charles Manning, used in this story, are not actual, but fictitious.—The Editor.)

## "I Was A Karpis-Barker Gang Moll"

[Continued from page 39]

when we drove home that night. He was not going to be played for a sap or a punk.

"Rabbit, I'm going to get my money tomorrow night," he said. I knew things were coming to a showdown. "I am going to meet Fred and this time I'm going to get my cut."

I knew and Volney knew what it meant to have trouble with the gang. When he left the cottage the next night it was an even break he would not come back alive. Fred was a killer and would not hesitate to shoot. It wouldn't make any difference to him that Volney had helped in the Bremer snatch. There is no such thing as "pal" when thieves fall out. Volney was ready to kill, too, and I knew he was not going to give Fred the chance to shoot first.

"Don't open the door to anyone, Rabbit—not to anyone," Volney warned me. "I may have serious trouble. If I have trouble with Fred, I will have trouble with Doc and Karpis too. But if that little redhead (meaning Fred) says one word to me I'll shoot him in the head."

He handed me a forty-five automatic.

"If I get shot they'll come up here and take you for a ride," he warned me. "If any of them come up here use this rod and shoot to kill. That is what they

would do to you. Don't ask questions or take any chances. Just let 'em have it."

He did not need to tell me what would happen to me if he was killed by the mob. The first thing they would think of would be to rub me out. They would know Volney had told me where he was going and I could put the finger on the mob. I knew too much. Dr. Moran knew too much and they had drowned him in Lake Erie.

When Volney left I turned out all the lights in the cottage and waited in the dark with the forty-five in my hand. My car was in the back yard ready if I needed it in a hurry.

I had plenty of time to think things over. The shivers ran up and down my back. I did not want to get killed or to kill anybody but any minute trouble might cut loose. That is the way you get backed into a corner you never dream about when you get started in the rackets. You get to know too much, your "friends" get jittery you may squeal on them, and the first thing you know you are on the spot.

It was funny to sit there in the dark thinking that the very people that might be on the way to kill me right then were men I had thought were underworld



"friends." I had drunk with them, danced with them, stuck with them, thinking I was having a good time. I had gone through plenty and kept my mouth shut. For that they would turn a Tommy gun on me and I would be found along some country road full of bullets. Or more likely never found at all, rotting in some hidden grave they dug like they had for Earl and John Hamilton.

It was only an hour that I sat there in that dark cottage, clutching the automatic and jumping like a cat every time I heard a sound.

Then a car drove up. I nearly fainted with relief. It was Volney.

### Gang Splits Up

HE HAD got his split of the Bremer ransom money. The gang had decided it was best to split up for a while. By this time most of them had had their pictures in the newspapers as Bremer kidnap suspects. This meant that it wasn't only the police they had to fear. Any day somebody who had seen their pictures in a detective magazine or the newspapers might recognize them and notify the authorities. Dr. Moran's face-lifting operations hadn't changed their looks enough to make them feel safe. Uncle Sam was after them full blast.

Volney and I packed up and went to Buffalo, then to Niagara Falls for a few days, and back to our cottage. Things were getting hot. We decided to get away from the East and the rest of the gang. We had some friends in Glasgow, Mont., and decided we would go out there and go into some kind of business and lose ourselves.

Volney and I took different routes on the trip to Montana, driving two cars. He went by way of Neosho, Mo., to visit his folks. I took the most direct way through the northwest. My car was loaded heavy as I carried most of the baggage.

On Wednesday morning I left the cottage near Lorain, Ohio, and by Friday evening I was halfway through North Dakota. I had driven about five hundred miles that day and was nervous and tired. I did not dare to take things easy and pushed the car at terrific speed. It was open country and I made good time but the roads were gravel and I was more used to driving on pavement.

The first thing I knew I hit a patch of

loose gravel. The front wheels hit it at high speed and tore the steering wheel out of my hands before I knew what was happening. The car shot off the road, hit something and turned over twice. I was thrown right through the top of the car and the baggage with me.

I must have been unconscious for quite a while. When I came to I was lying in a ditch. I had been thrown a hundred feet from the car. I guess it was a lucky thing I was thrown clear, as the car was completely demolished and I would certainly have been killed outright if I had stayed in it.

I tried to get up but could hardly move. I was dazed from shock but I knew I had to do something before somebody came. Blood was streaming down my face and I was afraid I had several broken bones. Finally I managed to get to my feet and staggered and dragged myself to the car. There was an overnight bag in the wreck which contained \$1,100. It was dark, about 7 o'clock in the evening.

I was fumbling about trying to find the bag when a car drove up. The driver got out, scared and excited.

"Get in my car," he said, "and let me take you to a hospital."

"No. I am not hurt," I answered him.

He just stared at me as if I were out of my mind. He could see I was covered with blood.

"Lady, you are hurt," he said. "You will bleed to death."

He just picked me up and put me in his car and drove to the nearest town, which was Rugby, N. D. I wanted to make him put me down but did not have the strength to resist.

He took me to a hospital and the doctor and nurse carried me to the first aid room. They took off my clothes, which were soggy with blood, and put a hospital gown on me. They dressed my wounds, taking a few stitches in my head and lip, which were cut pretty bad, and then put me in a hospital room.

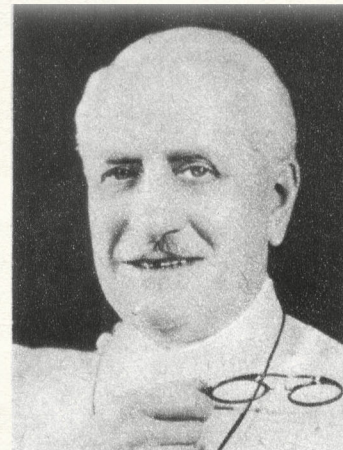
In a few minutes the nurse came in and asked me my name and address. That was what I was afraid of—questions. I told her I was Mrs. E. J. Powell, as that was the name my car was registered under.

The police had of course gone out to look over the wreck and in a few minutes the sheriff called at the hospital and asked the nurse if I had a title to my car. I told her I did—that she would find it in my purse. I hoped that would satisfy them. My baggage and the car, the nurse told me, were at the sheriff's office. He wanted to talk to me but the nurse told him I was in a serious condition and he would have to wait until morning.

### A Serious Jam

I KNEW I had to do something and do it quick. I was in a spot. I was not thinking of my injuries. I was thinking of the \$1,100 in my overnight bag and a pistol I had in the dash pocket of the car. The sheriff would be sure to find these and would become suspicious and investigate me.

I was hot. I could not stand investigation. The Department of Justice was looking for me. The slightest clue that I had any connection with the Karpis-Barker mob and it would be all up. The country was still in an uproar over the Bremer snatch and my underworld friends were the most desperately wanted criminals in the United States. The mob had split up and I did not know where they



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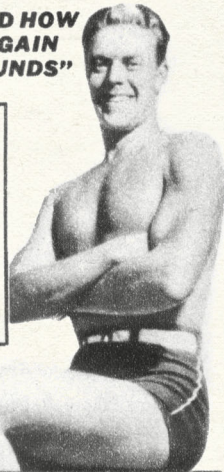
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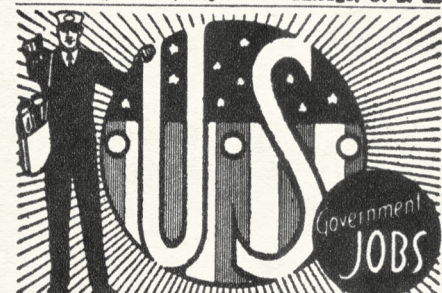
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were. I could expect no help from them. In fact, I knew they would be glad if I was dead and so could not be forced to give any information about them.

I told the nurse I wanted to make a phone call to a friend in Glasgow, Mont. She put in the call for me. I told him about the wreck and that he should come to Rugby at once. I needed him. That was all I dared say.

The next morning when I woke up I tried to move my head. I could not turn it a fraction of an inch. I could hardly see and thought I was going blind and paralyzed. It was a terrible sensation and I was scared to death.

"Nurse, nurse! Get the doctor at once!" I screamed.

She ran out and brought the doctor in. I told him how I felt.

"Mrs. Powell, I told you last night you were hurt worse than you thought," he said. "This does not surprise me at all."

They wheeled me into the X-ray room and took photos of my neck. In a few minutes the doctor told me what the X-rays showed.

"Mrs. Powell, you came very close to having a broken neck. You have two vertebrae broken in your neck and you have a severe back injury."

I was frantic but helpless. They put me on a hard bed, flat on my back, and taped my neck so I could not move it one way or the other.

There I was in a hospital, helpless, unable to move, and Uncle Sam's army of

government men were after me! My brain was in a whirl. I could not think. I could not move. I could only lie there worrying myself into a collapse.

That afternoon my friend arrived from Glasgow and when we were alone I told him of the money in the overnight bag and the pistol.

"What can I do?" I asked. "You know I am hot."

"I will go see the sheriff and see how he feels about it," my friend said. He left and was gone for three hours which seemed like days. Prison was staring me in the face and I could not run away from it, could not lift a finger to save myself.

My friend came back into the room and shut the door.

"The sheriff and the prosecutor are coming up to talk to you," he said. "Get your story together."

**What was the outcome of that interview—the story that Edna Murray told officials? Was she recognized as a kidnap fugitive? Read the answers in the concluding instalment of this dramatic story in the November issue of STARTLING DETECTIVE ADVENTURES, on sale at all newsstands September 29.**

## Solving Arizona's Apache Love Crimes

[Continued from page 31]

ried for miles on another gale that shrieked and howled over the San Carlos country.

"Death again rides that wind, my son," an old Apache prophesied as he squatted before a fire in Oon-Tam. "The Black God is hunting more skulls."

There was thunder in the dark sky, too, and it rolled and crashed with the thunder of the drums. The Black God of Death was violently cursing the Apache country.

Down under the cottonwoods in the deepcanyon another great fire roared defiantly. Bottles again were lifted to thirsty lips and crazed lovers whose nerves were calling for sedatives of kisses and deeper emotional responses were dancing to the clatter of a battered phonograph.

Day came and the clouds vanished. The booming of the drums was only an echo in the ears of the revelers and the fire had become a mass of coals.

Again there was a scream. It issued from a wash not far from Oon-Tam. The tribesmen who heard the cry hurried to the spot to gather about a prostrate form on the ground.

The man had been knifed horribly in the back, slashed again and again in a fiendish outburst of bloodletting. The man was turned over in order that the crowd might see his face. The tribesmen recognized Don Miller, an Apache of about 35 who was one of the moderns, a fellow who drank heavily and made merry with any girl who came his way and would flatter him with a wink.

Grant and the other Apache police found many tracks in the soft ground. They extended for a hundred yards or so. They told a brutally shocking story of



**For the sex murder of Henrietta Schmerler, Columbia University co-ed, Golney Seymour drew a life sentence. The Schmerler case was the first of a series of passion crimes on the reservation.**





**Max Dia, brother of the slain Alice Gardner, went to jail for ten years when he killed Don Miller in a quarrel over a girl.**

how Miller had run from the killer, had staggered and fallen when he reached the wash. Probably he would have died there but the murderer was mad for blood and had plunged the knife again and again into his victim. From the wash Miller had taken a few steps and had then toppled to the ground.

Some human vampire had struck again. Another murder had scarred the Apache country. The transcontinental news tickers once more clicked off stories telling of the latest Apache outbreak, of tribesmen who were running amuck in the drunken craze of a "new day."

Was the killer of Don Miller also the one who hatcheted Alice Gardner and her baby? Had Don Miller perhaps accidentally witnessed the slayings in the Gardner wikiup and been removed for fear that he would tell?

On the trail of this second surprising vampire murder came another sensational development. A little girl had confided to her mother that she had been present when Alice Gardner was murdered but she had been too frightened to mention the fact before. The girl was Dorothy Dia, a little sister of Alice Gardner. Wide-eyed and chubby-faced, she was a typical mischievous Apache child of nine years.

"I was playing outside," she said. "I heard sister crying and then I heard a funny noise. It sounded like—I don't know what—but it was awful. I decided to peek. I pulled back the flap and saw—"

She whispered a name to the officers—the name of the man who had hacked Alice Gardner and her baby to death.

It was the name of the woman's husband, Earl Gardner!

Close upon the heels of this revelation came a third sensational development. The identity of Don Miller's slayer was definitely established.

#### Trace Telltale Footprints

**P**AINSTAKINGLY Indians had studied the ground where Don Miller had fled from the Black God and lost his race with death. Their eyes photographed every detail of the marks made by the killer's shoe soles, including a peculiarly shaped cleat which had left an identifying mark in the earth.

One wizened Indian who had studied tracks, both human and animal, in the Apache country for many decades, thought he recognized those shoe prints. He mentioned the name of the owner to the other Apaches. They held their silence but inwardly they were skeptical.

But the old Indian was right. He found the shoes which had left the peculiar tracks at the first home he searched. It was the home of the Dias. The shoes were readily identified as those of Max Dia, brother of the slain Alice Gardner. Dia was jailed and officials resumed the Gardner investigation.

Salvador Grant had not been idle. Slowly he had woven a chain of evidence around the killer of Alice Gardner.

There was the deadly hatchet, corroded with blood, its blade dulled from plowing into flesh and bone. Its ownership was definitely established. It was the property of Earl Gardner.

There was the story of Dorothy Dia, which was logical in every step and unquestionably honest. There was the story of a girl who had reveled at the dance that Saturday night with Gardner. She was too frightened over the whole affair to lie.

There were the words of Alice Gardner come back to haunt the murderer, words which told of her fear of this "new day" with the drinking and dancing and the shameful crimes that sometimes followed.

Finally there was Gardner's criminal record—ten years at Leavenworth for a stabbing, a brutal attack of shocking violence.

Formally charged with the murder of his wife and child, Gardner callously admitted the double slaying. "I knew what I was doing when I killed them," he said solidly. "I meant to do it."

In the days that followed his attitude of casual indifference remained unchanged. He showed no emotion even when he was led into court, heavily shackled, and heard Assistant United States Attorney John P. Dougherty demand the death penalty.

"We must hang this slayer as an example to the Apaches," Dougherty pleaded. "That is the only way we are ever going to stop this wave of Indian murders. Only by sending this cold-blooded killer to the gallows can we remove this one's menace to society."

Arizona peace officers agreed, fearful of what might happen, not only to Indian villages but also to Caucasian towns if the number of hatchet, rock and knife murders continued to increase. They were thinking of the sixteen slayings in eight months on the Indian reservations, almost half of them in the Apache hinterlands, of the hundreds of cases involving illicit relations between boys and girls of high school age during the last year.

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The first jury disagreed over the death penalty. But the federal prosecutors were determined that Gardner should hang. They knew that only his death would convince other hardened Indian youths that the federal government was serious. District Attorney Flynn and Dougherty prosecuted again. This time they obtained a death verdict on February 6, 1936.

### Doomed To The Gallows

ONE week later Gardner was brought before Federal Judge Albert M. Sames in Globe, Ariz., for formal sentence. In solemn tones the judge intoned his doom: "You are to be hanged by the neck until you are dead and may God have mercy on your soul!"

"Thank God!" said Gardner. "I want to hang," he said simply. Whatever passions had once burned through his veins had vanished. He was meek and seemingly penitent.

Perhaps when Earl Gardner said he wanted to hang he was thinking of the pretty wife and doll-like baby he had butchered in a crazed moment, thinking perhaps he might tell them he was sorry if he ever reached them in some happy hunting grounds of the Apaches.

Perhaps he was recalling the events of that Sunday morning. How Alice had scolded him for having neglected her for other women who would love him for a passing moment and then go to another's arms while she was always his. How the lust to kill had welled in his veins until it seemed that his head was throbbing to the bursting point. How he had been caught up in a monsoon of terrible passions which drove him to wreak vengeance for his own sins on the one whom he had once loved.

Perhaps he lived again that terrible moment when he had screamed to stifle her outcry as he brought the hatchet crashing down upon her head—when he had turned upon his child and battered out its life with savage blows. He re-

membered that the slaughter had taken only a few seconds from the time she reproached him until, shaking unsteadily as the pounding in his veins eased, he had staggered outside. Well, the noose would end all that—forever blot out the horrible memories of his deed.

Max Dia escaped the gallows. Because he killed in a drunken brawl and contended that it was in self defense, he was sentenced February 9, 1936, to ten years in prison. As far as the Apache police were able to determine, there was no relation between the Gardner slayings and that of Don Miller. It was merely coincidence that Alice Gardner's brother should have become a murderer only three days after his sister's death.

Following the Gardner and Miller slaying the ritual drums were heard less often on the San Carlos reservation. There were fewer drunken orgies, fewer sex-inspired dances to whip the young braves and their loves into an emotional frenzy. But Earl Gardner was fated to dance once again—a macabre dance of death as the Black God claimed another victim.

The first faint streaks of dawn were lighting the sky on July 13, 1936, when the three-time slayer mounted the emergency scaffold at Globe, Ariz. "I'm glad it's over—I mean I'm glad it will be over soon," said Gardner as the noose was placed around his neck.

But it was not over soon. As Gardner plunged through the trap his body swung sideways. His left arm struck the plank and his head banged against the side of the scaffold, breaking his fall.

Kicking in agony, Gardner slowly strangled for twenty minutes. Then a deputy finally tightened the noose. The end came twelve minutes later, more than half an hour after the trap had been sprung.

The law had avenged the brutal slaughter of Alice Dia and her child and the Black God of the Apaches smirked as he contemplated the thing dangling at a rope's end which once had been a man.

## Texas' Hanging Skeleton

[Continued from page 45]

The "eternal triangle" drew our attention.

At one corner was McBee, steady working, home-loving husband. At another was Raymond Henry, the good-looking truck driver, younger by fifteen years than McBee. And at the third corner was the wife, 28 years old, attractive, vivacious, a lover of wine and song and entertainment. The daughter of a farmer living five miles from Eastland, she had been married to McBee for more than twelve years.

The thing that interested us most, however, was the marriage of Mrs. McBee and Raymond Henry in September, 1934—three months before McBee's body was found hanging near the graveyard.

The love element was running strong through the vitals of this death mystery.

We turned our attention to rumors. There were scores of them, and they all involved three persons—McBee, his wife, and Raymond Henry.

It was discovered that quite a crowd had been in and out of McBee's house

both the night before and the day and night of May 1, 1933.

And we found a doctor whom we believed was the last person—except the murderer—to see McBee alive. He was called to the McBee home because of the illness of Mrs. McBee. As he was preparing to leave, McBee came in.

"He asked me what was wrong, and I told him his wife was sick, and he staggered out," the physician told us.

The doctor said he heard "several voices" in the rooms, but saw only two persons he recognized.

One of them was "Sandy" Tyler.

We learned from a secret source that Raymond Henry was in the McBee residence all day May 1, 1933, and that Mrs. McBee and McBee were there.

There was nothing we could do but drag the investigation out into the light.

We found from various residents that there had been trouble brewing in the McBee home right up to the night McBee disappeared. On April 29, 1933, a resident of Rising Star gave a dance. The McBees and Henry were present. Mrs.



McBee allegedly shoved McBee out of the house, shouting at him, "Get out of here, you dirty old brute." Our informant said McBee was drinking. And the host on this occasion, who accompanied the three to the McBee home, said "there might have been a little necking" between McBee's wife and Henry.

We could not get Tyler's name out of the tangle. Almost at every turn, it bobbed up, and although we could find nothing to accuse him of directly, regarding either McBee's disappearance or his subsequent death, we all felt that Tyler could, if he would, clear up the mystery.

### Grand Jury Acts

**S**LOWLY things began to pile up against Raymond Henry and the former Mrs. McBee. They had been too openly friendly. There was talk.

A grand jury was in session in February, 1935, and we brought a number of witnesses before the probers. Even though there were so many loopholes in our case that we could have used it for a sieve, we pushed it.

The grand jurors heard the story of the alleged romance; of McBee's reported disappearance, and the subsequent discovery of his body. Some of the witnesses, I am sorry to say, lied before that grand jury.

We knew then we didn't have a case, but we knew we needed a lever.

On February 1, 1935, the grand jury indicted Raymond Henry and his wife for the murder of her former husband, H. L. McBee. They were immediately arrested.

We had made an open move, but I must admit we were shaky about it. The cases were set for trial, but it did not mean anything. We were not ready for trial then, nor the next month, nor a year from then.

If we had anticipated that the grand jury indictments and the arrests would

bring forth any information either from Henry or his wife, we were wrong. Nothing came except their denials that they knew anything about McBee's disappearance, other than the fact that he had left the house and had not returned.

The indictments charged that McBee had been stabbed with "some sharp instrument, the nature of which to the grand jurors is unknown." Specifically, they charged that he had been killed by hanging and cutting.

We did not even know what kind of an instrument was used. That is how far we were from a solution of the case.

A month dragged by, then another. The cases were postponed, called and postponed, called and continued.

Then one day Dabney came into my office and sat down. He had been like a bloodhound on the trail of a fleeing felon. No rumor was too wild for him, no scrap of gossip too minute for him to study. As a special prosecutor and investigator, he was delving into the case with tooth and nail.

That day, we were both a little discouraged.

"I wonder," he mused, "if we can get a little money or a little help from the state in this investigation. The new patrol, maybe."

It so happened that Texas' entire police force had been reorganized. The Texas Rangers and the highway patrol had been combined under one gigantic agency, the Texas Department of Safety. There were investigators and crime laboratories and a unified machine to fight crime.

We turned to this state agency, and it was the greatest stroke we made during that entire investigation.

That famous Texas character, "Lone Wolf" Gonzales, for years the two-gun terror of Texas bad boys, was contacted. He immediately assigned J. N. Thompson, investigator of the state department, to the case. Thompson enlisted the aid of blue-clad A. L. Barr of Abilene, highway patrolman working on State Highway No. 1, that runs across the state from Texarkana to El Paso. He is a crack officer if I ever saw one.

They joined the Eastland county officers and renewed the investigation. Every scrap of information we had was turned over to them.

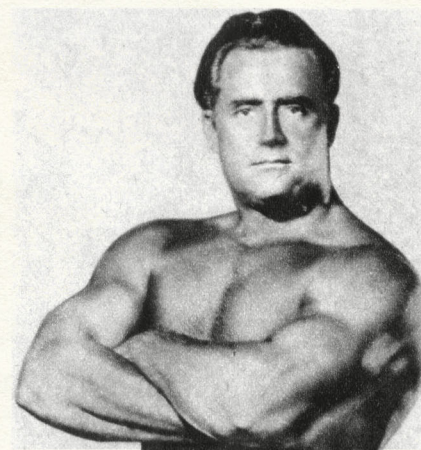
### Strike New Leads

**A**LTHOUGH nearly a year had passed since McBee's body was found swinging from a tree, and more than two years had gone by since McBee disappeared, all of us felt that solution was not far away.

The crack state men moved in and out of the Rising Star area, picking up rumors, sifting them, chasing blind clues, every now and then salvaging something to piece into the jigsaw of death. They learned more and more of the romance between Della McBee and Raymond Henry. They checked every move of Sandy Tyler.

Then they made an important discovery. Two brothers, Jackson Smith, 40, and Lynn Smith, some years younger; Sandy Tyler and H. L. McBee went to a home near Rising Star for some whisky early in the night of May 1, 1933. McBee and Jack Smith were left at a vacant house while Tyler and Lynn tried to get the liquor. They were unsuccessful, and left.

Weeks were slipping away, but our investigation was gaining. We were learning by degrees who went in and out of



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the McBee home that fatal day and night.

But trouble was on us. Defense attorneys of Mr. and Mrs. Henry were clamoring for trial. They knew we didn't have a case, and we knew it. The end of the year rolled around.

The trials were set for February 17, 1936.

The state investigators were frantic. They felt their first real break was near, and they knew that it would ruin everything to go to trial with these cases on February 17.

I assured them there would be no trials, that I would dismiss the indictments on my own motion rather than be forced into court on them as they were.

Against a determined legal counsel, we gained one more continuance. It was a breathing spell.

On February 17 the state investigators telephoned me. They gave me the names of six persons.

"We believe there are eight persons who know when, how and why McBee was killed," the investigators told me. "One is Mrs. Henry, another is her husband, Raymond. And these six are the rest. We want them."

I made out the complaints and put them in my pocket. We had decided to keep the entire move secret, and not to file the papers in the county seat, but in Cisco, 10 miles west. I gave them to the justice of the peace there, asked for warrants, and told him to "file these in your desk drawer and forget where you put them. We may be wrong on this and we can't take any chances now." He issued the warrants.

That night Sandy Tyler and his wife; Jackson Smith and his brother, Lynn Smith; T. R. Crosswhite, Raymond Henry's employer; and Pete Fenwick, an oil field worker and friend of Tyler and Henry, were taken into custody and spirited away to Coleman, seat of another county. It should be said here that Sheriff Frank Mills of Coleman worked with officers night and day on this case, and gave invaluable aid to us in gathering evidence.

There was relentless questioning and out of it all came two startling revelations.

We found that the wire with which McBee was hanged was part of a clothesline that stretched in the rear of Sandy Tyler's home.

And it was discovered that the tattered little piece of quilt that was found near McBee's body was part of a quilt that came from Tyler's home.

### The Net Closes

**T**HE officers had picked out one angle of the case and were hammering at it for what it was worth. After McBee had been gone for three weeks, Mrs. McBee moved into the Tyler home. There she had meetings with Henry. But she moved out one day because Mrs. Tyler had told her "not to be affectionate with Raymond around the children."

Once Raymond came over, and the Smith boys, too, and one of them put McBee's hat on his head and laughed, "That's the way Old Man McBee used to wear it."

Mrs. Tyler told us that after Mrs. McBee moved to her home and three weeks after McBee disappeared, the clothing which was found on his bones was in her house, and the highway tag which was found in his pocket was attached to a shirt. About three weeks after he disappeared, she missed the clothing and the tag.

Mrs. McBee, in reporting his disap-

pearance, had said he wore the clothes and had the tag in his pocket.

The net was closing.

The breaks came fast after that, as the state men and Dabney drove home point after point.

Finally Crosswhite talked; and then Fenwick, and finally Tyler.

And while all this was going on, nothing had got out of the whereabouts of the six persons. We were working in utmost secrecy.

Crosswhite, 32, operator of the rural ice delivery service for which Henry worked, admitted a series of arrests and charges involving pipe line theft and sale of liquor. He told of events on the morning of May 1, 1933.

"I wanted to borrow a rheumatism belt from McBee," Crosswhite told us, "and Henry and I rode over there on the morning of May 1. Henry and I went into the house, and McBee was on the bed, feeling bad. I did not approve of the affections displayed by Mrs. McBee and Henry behind McBee's bed; so I went outside and waited for Henry."

"I sat in the car for two minutes. I heard just a little noise—like a chair sliding, and a door slammed. Raymond came out, and I saw an ice pick in his hand. His eyes were kind of glassy. He jumped in the car and got the crank. I asked him, 'What the devil—have you gone crazy and lost your mind?' We drove away."

### The Murder Weapon

**H**E SAID that a few days later he and Henry were in Rising Star, and McBee's little boy came up to Raymond and asked, "Have you seen my daddy? He's gone and we can't find him."

"I asked Raymond who the boy was, and he said, 'That's old McBee's boy.'"

Veteran officers were shocked as Crosswhite revealed a visit he, Raymond and McBee's widow made to McBee's sunken grave in the old family burial plot in 1935, after the skeleton had been found and buried.

"We went out there," he said, "and it was the first time Mrs. McBee had been there. The grave was sunken, and Mrs. Henry broke down and cried. She said that regardless of what had happened, that man would always be the father of her children, and the guilty ones would be punished for it."

"Raymond Henry was standing there and he said, 'I don't see why. He ought to be stabbed three times with an ice pick and hanged to a tree 99 years.'"

So it was an ice pick that was thrust into the body of McBee! But we still had not learned everything. There was the hanging to account for.

Pete Fenwick said he went to the home of the McBees rather early in the night. When he got there, he saw Mrs. McBee and Raymond, but McBee was not present.

"I sat around there awhile talking," he

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said, "and pretty soon Jack and Lynn Smith and Sandy Tyler came in.

"They were carrying McBee.

"They brought him in and put him on the bed. McBee was groaning, and going on about being sick. Tyler said he was going to get a doctor, and Raymond Henry shut the door.

"No," he told Tyler. "Let him die."

"I asked Raymond what was the matter with Old Man McBee, and he told me he stabbed him with an ice pick that morning. I stayed at the house until about 2 a. m., but Sandy Tyler left. I tried to leave too, but Lynn Smith wouldn't let me. The old man died about 10 o'clock that night.

"Henry said, 'Well, he's dead, and we've got to do something about it.' We put the body in Lynn Smith's car, in the turtle-back, and went to a woods near the Rising Star cemetery. We passed the cemetery, stopped the car, and all took McBee out of the car. Me and Jack Smith carried McBee by the feet while Raymond and Lynn got him around the neck. We dug a hole and put him in it. It was waist deep. We left it there.

"About three weeks later we all went back. This time we went by Tyler's house and got him. We got a quilt at Tyler's home. We dug up the body and put it in the quilt, using it as a kind of stretcher. We carried the body into the woods and Raymond, reaching a tree, said, 'This is far enough. This is a pretty good tree.'

"He climbed the tree and we hanged McBee. We hanged him up there so they would think it was suicide. We clothed McBee in some clothes we had got at the Tyler home, where Mrs. McBee was staying, and put his highway tag in his pocket, so he would be sure and be identified when he was found. We buried the quilt."

#### Clear Last Point

**WE NEEDED** only one point cleared up—where had the Smith boys and Tyler been when they came back carrying McBee? Tyler cleared that up.

He told of going to the McBee house before Fenwick got there.



"Howdy, mugs! Lookit da cigars I won over at Coney Island!"

"I saw him on the bed," Tyler said. "They told me he was sick. His head was lying toward the east, and he was on his right side. I asked him what the trouble was, and he said Raymond Henry stuck him with an ice pick that morning. I told him I was going to get a doctor, but they wouldn't let me go. Me and Jack and Lynn Smith and McBee went to get some whisky in Lynn Smith's car. We drove up to a bootlegger's house and said we wanted whisky for McBee. McBee and Jack Smith were left at a vacant house while the rest of us tried to get the whisky. We didn't get any, so we brought Old Man McBee back and carried him in the house and put him on the bed. Pete Fenwick was there with Mrs. McBee and Henry. McBee showed me where Raymond Henry stuck an ice pick in him that morning. It was on the left side, and he pulled up his undershirt and showed me a blue spot where he said Raymond stuck him.

"I would have talked long ago, but I was afraid. They even threatened to hurt my wife if I told anything."

Tyler told of making the trip to the grave three weeks after McBee was buried.

"I told them, 'Boys, I don't want to go,' but they told me I could stay in the car, but to be sure and be there when they got back. They took the quilt out and were gone about an hour."

Our case, we felt, was complete.

The old indictments were discarded. New ones charging murder were returned against Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Henry and Jackson and Lynn Smith. Crosswhite, Fenwick and Sandy Tyler and his wife were to be state witnesses. The indictments were returned March 3, 1936.

But nothing about this case was destined to run smoothly.

On March 20, Jackson Smith sat in his cell talking to his brother, Lynn. It was the Eastland county jail, the same one where Marshall Ratliff killed a jailer and was lynched for it two hours later.

"Well," Jackson said, "we're in it now."

He drew a razor blade from his clothes and quickly slashed his throat and wrists. Lynn Smith screamed, not so much in terror at his brother's actions, but in fear for his own safety.

"Why did you do that? Now they'll blame all of this on me!"

Jackson Smith died, a suicide.

Raymond Henry went to trial in district court at Eastland March 30. A battery of legal talent represented him.

Fenwick, the Tylers and Crosswhite testified against him. Henry took the stand in his own defense and denied the charges.

L. H. Flewellen, a defense attorney, putting Tyler through a sizzling cross-examination, shouted: "Isn't it true that you killed McBee?" Tyler smiled and denied it.

A jury believed the state witnesses. They found Henry guilty, fixed his penalty at 50 years in the state penitentiary.

Mrs. Henry, hearing the verdict, said to him, "Honey, I know you didn't do it."

She is out on bond awaiting trial. Lynn Smith also is free on bond, the murder charge having been dismissed. He still may be tried as an alleged accessory.

After three long years the hanging skeleton case is solved.

(Mrs. Tyler and T. R. Crosswhite apparently had no knowledge of the crime, and in no way participated in it or in the events after the crime. —The Editor.)



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## Grim Riddle of the Umpawaug Pond

[Continued from page 52]

The second man closed in on him. "Oh, you don't?" he snarled. "Well, I do. Calling on another woman when you tell my sister that you love her and want to marry her."

The police officer stopped.

"See here," he said. "You don't understand. I called on police business. About this murder."

"Says you!" exclaimed the other. "It all sounds like a lot of hooey to me. Just like that seven thousand dollars you say you've got in the bank. Like the ring you've promised but never bought my sister. I don't believe you're any more of a cop than I am."

The other man stopped short. "Oh, you don't," he said tensely. "Well, I'm bound for police headquarters now. Come along if you like and see if I'm on the level."

Outside police headquarters, the two separated. Through the window the second man watched the other in animated conversation with the sergeant at the desk. The waiting man was in chastened spirits when the other rejoined him.

They walked down the street. Trailing close behind, never letting the two out of sight for a single instant, was my undercover man, Anthony Martino.

### Halt Dragging Operations

ON THE following morning, May 9, Connolly and Goldstein stopped their dragging operations at Umpawaug Pond. "There's not a bit of use in wasting any more time," Goldstein said. "We've dragged for over two days and I tell you the body is not in that pond."

I tried to persuade the men to continue but it was useless. They were convinced that the body was not in the pond and had no intention of taking any more of the state's money.

I felt discouraged. I would have staked my reputation as an officer that Hultz's body had been dumped into the water. Now even my own convictions began to waver.

Somebody touched my arm. It was Constable Bruce Nearing of New Milford. He gestured toward the two men who were busy gathering up their grappling equipment. "Quitting?" he asked.

"Yes," I said. "They say I'm wrong—that they have searched the pond thoroughly and there is no trace of Hultz."

"Don't you believe it," said Nearing. "Look," he continued, "we have a new fangled acetylene torch over in New Milford with unusually penetrating rays. It will cut right through the water. With it we have already found a couple of bodies when other means have failed and we'd like to try here."

"That's okay with me," I said, "but what makes you certain that Hultz is really in the pond?"

Nearing pointed to the sky. A huge bird was wheeling over the pond in wide, lazy circles. "That bird has been soaring over this lake ever since Saturday," he said. "And he's not looking for fish. That critter's watching a dead body down deep beneath the surface!"

The acetylene experiment had its test



on the following night. Out on the waters of Umpawaug Pond four men were seated in a rowboat. Behind them stretched the dark, unlighted shoreline, almost hidden by a rising fog.

Constable Nearing moved a heavy, cumbersome object farther into the bow. "About ready, McMahon?" he asked.

Constable Timothy McMahon looked over the black water, then turned to Constables Chester Morley and W. J. Kiefer at the oars.

"Row a little farther out," he ordered. "I'm working in a direct line with that telegraph pole on shore."

The boat got under way again as a match flared in sudden brightness. There was a moment's sputtering and a brilliant light glowed on the pond's surface. McMahon and Nearing looked over the side. They could see nothing. For more than an hour the constables at the oars pulled first this way and then that across the pond, the rays of the acetylene torch ever pointed downwards. But the black waters, surcharged with mud, kept any secrets safely hidden. Finally McMahon turned regretfully to the others. The experiment had been a failure.

"As long as we're here, I'm going to put over a grappling iron," Constable Morley said. McMahon took his place at the oar. "Pull out so we're in line with that pole."

For a while nothing happened. Then suddenly Morley tensed as the limp irons tightened and the rope grew taut.

"We've got something," he said. He pulled vigorously at the rope. Breathlessly the others watched while the rays of the acetylene torch were again directed downwards.

Deep in the water a vague form took shape as Morley pulled. It came to rest just beneath the surface, bloated and swollen.

"It's Hultz," cried McMahon.

The others peered down on a ghastly human face, battered and bruised, whose glassy eyes stared upwards through the water. McMahon was right. Hultz had been found. They started towards the shore, towing the body behind them.

An hour later Constable Nearing pounded on the door of the barracks. Breathlessly he told me how the grappling iron had caught the shoulder of the

missing man about two hundred yards from shore. I got in touch immediately with Sergeant Virelli and then called Medical Examiner E. H. Smith, who suggested the body remain where it was until morning. Trooper Charles Comstock was dispatched to stand guard over it through the night.

At daybreak Sergeant Virelli, Medical Examiner Smith and I hurried to Umpawaug Pond. The body, clad in shirt and trousers, was pulled to shore. Sergeant Virelli and I stood by as Smith made a rapid examination.

"There's a compound fracture of the lower jaw," he said. "One of the teeth is missing and the jaw bone has been smashed away."

"I know," I said.

"Death, however, was caused by this double fracture." He pointed to an ugly wound on the left side of the head. "His skull was pounded into pulp by some flat metal instrument."

In the dead man's pockets Medical Examiner Smith found a gold watch. The hands were stopped at exactly 9:05. In another pocket he found the wages of the dead man untouched. Sergeant Virelli and I exchanged surprised glances. It began to look as though robbery might not have been the predominating motive after all.

Medical Examiner Smith left to make arrangements for the body to be removed to a nearby undertaking establishment before taking it to the receiving tomb in the Branchville cemetery, where a further examination would be made.

Sergeant Virelli also departed immediately. He said he wanted another talk with John Dandone.

I started back to the barracks. On the way I was stopped by Bashford Bain, the station master.

"Something happened a month or so ago when I had a man cutting wood for me which looks suspicious," he said. "This man had just been up to get George Hultz to change some money for him and he said the old man flashed a roll which would choke a horse."

"Most everybody knows Hultz liked to flash money," I replied.

"But that isn't all," Bain continued. "This chap told me his girl wanted him to get her a diamond ring and he wanted to know how much one would cost as he was broke. I told him perhaps a hundred dollars. Yesterday I understand this chap was looking at diamonds over in Danbury."

"What's this man's name?" I asked.

He told me. It was the man who called himself a state trooper. I thanked Bain and left. I did not tell him I had already received similar information from Anthony Martino, my undercover man in Danbury, the night before.

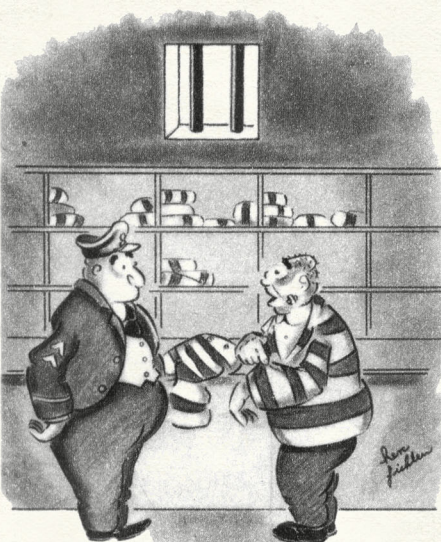
Sergeant Virelli was greatly excited when he arrived at the barracks.

"I've just talked with John Dandone," he said, "and I'm convinced he's not telling all he knows. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he did the job himself."

"What makes you think that?"

"He doesn't look good to me and I'm going to make him tell me how much he knows. Tonight you and I are going to take John Dandone to the receiving vault in the Branchville cemetery. He's going to identify George Hultz."

"Before you do all this, there's something I think you ought to know," I said and went on to tell him of my conversation with Bashford Bain and the confirming information received from Martino.



"I'd like to see it in the light before I take it."

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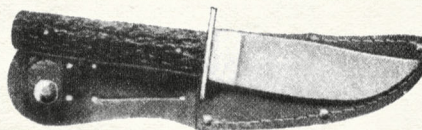
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Virelli heard me through in silence. "That's interesting," he said, "but I still think we ought to keep our date with Dandone."

### The Meeting In The Tomb

SO IT was that night within the clammy confines of the receiving tomb at the Branchville cemetery, lit only by the flickering rays of an oil lantern, John Dandone, Sergeant Virelli and I stood beside the sheeted form of the murdered man.

The day had been excessively warm. A storm was brewing and a rising wind howling through creaking branches could be faintly heard inside the gloomy crypt.

Sergeant Virelli stepped beside the improvised bier.

"Here he is, Dandone," Virelli said. "Just as we found him. Can you identify him?"

He threw back the sheet and reached for the lantern. As he did so, an eerie light, brilliant in its sudden intensity, played through the grilling of the crypt door illuminating the horribly mangled face of the dead man. Afterwards I realized we had seen only the headlights from some automobile turning in the roadway beyond, but its effect was startling.

There was a tense silence. Dandone seemed the least affected of us all. He slowly advanced and looked down.

"Yes," he said softly. "There is no question. That is my old friend, George Hultz."

"Died a pretty terrible death, didn't he, Dandone?" Virelli continued. "Look at that battered jaw." He held the lantern close. "And that head. The poor devil never had a chance."

"Poor old man," murmured Dandone.

Skilfully, Virelli dwelt with savage intensity upon each gruesome detail. In that stone-lined sepulcher bordered by the silent city of the dead, they assumed more grisly horrors. I glanced at Dandone. He was moistening dry lips nervously. Apparently unnoticed, Virelli continued. He uncovered the corpse, showing the scratches and other bruises made when the body was dragged to the pond. He produced the tooth I had picked up that first morning and fitted it into the dead man's jaw. Dandone seemed to be reaching his limit. He stared wildly about, his eyes intent upon the rusty iron door we had closed behind us.

"This is terrible," he cried at last. "But why do you stand here talking? Why don't you go out and get the man who did this awful deed?"

"That is just what we are going to do," Sergeant Virelli promised grimly.

But several weeks were to elapse before we made good that boast.

Previous to the funeral, held shortly after that night in the tomb, an autopsy had been performed by Medical Examiner Smith and Doctor Bruce Weaver of Stamford. Their findings revealed the old man had been literally clubbed to death. He was dead before being placed in the pond. No traces of water were discovered in the lungs. The inquest set upon several occasions was postponed again. It was rumored that the Hultz case would go unsolved.

We said nothing. We were marking time. Our case was complete. All I awaited now was a telephone call.

It came on July 7. Anthony Martino was on the other end of the line. He was calling from Danbury.

"It's broken at last," he said. "Get over here as soon as you can."

I turned to Sergeant Virelli standing beside my desk.

"Come on," I said. "We're closing in."

A half hour later, Sergeant Virelli, Anthony Martino, several members of the Danbury police department and myself were standing outside a jewelry store in Danbury.

Inside an enthusiastic group, including one of the prettiest girls I have ever seen, was standing beside a counter picking out a diamond engagement ring. We stood in the shadows watching as the girl at last made a selection, slipped the ring on her finger and turned with glowing face to the handsome, well-built man beside her, who laid bill after bill on the counter.

### Trap Bludgeon Slayer

THE happy group left the store. As they reached the sidewalk, we stepped forward. Sergeant Virelli laid a hand upon the shoulder of the young man who had just paid a hundred dollars for the ring. He was the mysterious figure who claimed secret and important connections with the state police.

"You're under arrest," he said.

"Under arrest?" the man repeated.

"What for?" the girl demanded.

"Murder," I replied sternly. The girl shrank back. "The murder of George Hultz."

The arrested man looked me squarely in the eye.

"You know me, Sergeant Kelly," he said.

"Certainly, I know you," I said. "I know you as John Dandone, a farmhand who needed a hundred dollars to buy a ring for the girl beside you and I know you as John Dandone who claims to be a member of the Connecticut State Police. You barely escaped arrest some months ago in Norwalk when you represented yourself as a member of my outfit."

"I always said he was no cop," the brother of the engaged girl said.

Dandone was taken at once to the county jail where we questioned him. The prisoner however, refused to talk. On Monday, July 9, 1923, we brought him before Justice of the Peace Samuel Nicholas, Jr., who ordered him held without bail and remanded him to the Bridgeport jail.

I felt well pleased with our work. I had been more or less suspicious of John Dandone from the beginning. He seemed too anxious to be of service and swore to be such a good friend of George Hultz when witnesses at the Dewsnap farm told a different story. Then I heard of his supposed connection with the state police which he told to this girl in Danbury. He had boasted of having seven thousand dollars in the bank when, as a matter of fact, he was only making fifteen dollars

[Continued on page 80]

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## Grim Riddle of the Umpawaug Pond

[Continued from page 78]

a month. Anthony Martino, a friend of the family, listened to Dandone's boastings and must have enjoyed many a quiet chuckle. Coupled with the truly valuable information both Sergeant Virelli and I learned from Bashford Bain and others, we put two and two together and Dandone's arrest followed as a logical outcome.

### Confesses Slaying

SEVERAL days after Dandone was confined, his nerve broke and he confessed the killing of Hultz, offering self defense as a motive. Dandone claimed that the old man fired at him through a window in the cottage while he was picking dandelions on the Van Rein estate.

"I saw him as he moved away from the window," Dandone stated, "and I thought he went after another cartridge. I ran toward his house and jumped through a window and found George Hultz with a gun in his hands. I grabbed the gun and took it away from him and asked him why he shot at me after he told me I could go up there and pick greens."

Hultz, Dandone said, mumbled some reply, but when Dandone started out the door grabbed the gun again.

"Seeing he was going to shoot me, I quickly grabbed a log hook and struck him alongside the head. He fell, striking his chin on the stove. Seeing Hultz was dead, I put the gun in the corner and dragged his body to the pond. I walked out into the water, laid his body on the surface and pushed it out into the center. It was then 9 o'clock."

"If all this happened at 9 o'clock as you say," I objected, "how did fire break out in an empty house at 5 o'clock the next morning?"

"The only way I can account for the fire is that there was a fire in the stove at the time I struck George Hultz. I do not remember whether I knocked the stove over when I dragged him out."

"Didn't you find a pocketbook stuffed with money?"

"A wallet did fall out of his vest while I was dragging the body towards the pond," he replied. "I laid down the body and picked it up. There were two ten dollar bills and two five dollar bills. I then threw the wallet away and put the money in my pocket."

Try as I would, I could not break this story down. According to my information, Hultz had close to one hundred and fifty dollars on his person at the time of his death. Nor could I learn why Dandone had not taken the other money from his victim's pockets.

"Tell me one other thing, Dandone," I said in conclusion. "Didn't you kill the old man so that you could get enough money to buy that girl a diamond ring?"

"I did it in self defense," he protested.

The jury which heard his case found him guilty of manslaughter. He was given a long term behind prison bars. On December 10, 1932, the last chapter was written in the riddle of Umpawaug Pond when Dandone was taken from prison and deported to Italy.

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## Public Enemy and Crime Suppression

[Continued from page 9]

and while still under its dizzying influence his recklessness and braggadocio has landed him behind prison bars before he knows it. Make a dangerous criminal, one who might otherwise go on robbing and killing indefinitely, a public figure, a *public enemy*, and he is already on his way to the gallows. He may remain free for a few weeks or a few months but it is only borrowed time. "The heat is on" and even gangdom hesitates to offer him refuge.

The trained officer learns to use every weapon at his command against the crook. He must if he expects to win in the constant battle against him. There has never been a time in the police history of the country when cleverness and resourcefulness is any greater asset to the officer. Each individual case demands some special treatment which calls upon the originality of the operative. We rave about equipment. It is necessary, certainly, but the hoodlum is just as able to procure and learn to use up-to-date equipment as the officer.

Today the war against crime is rather a war of brains against brains, of strategy against strategy, and if the police expect

to win they must have the strategy and brains on their side. Then let the knowledge that the law enforcing agencies can outwit the cleverest crook be demonstrated and publicized to all gangdom—and watch the demoralizing effect upon the rank and file of the underworld's notorious rats.

The capture of sixty-eight hoodlums in two years in the entire nation has not and cannot end crime when there are more than fifteen thousand of the same stamp to be dealt with every week. The battle front of the war upon crime is as far flung as the borders of the entire nation. It remains for the men on the firing line (I refer to the local law enforcement agencies) along that front to decide the issue, the men who go over the top a dozen times a day knowing that they face death at every turn. Let those behind the lines, in the courts, in the schools, at the nation's presses, everywhere that there is work to be done, support our soldiers in every possible way, for theirs is the sacred duty of protecting our homes against a common enemy that is a far greater menace to us than foreign invasion.

## The Chief's Chair

[Continued from page 6]

### Southern Floggings—

MEMORIES of the old Ku Klux Klan are stirring throughout the South as hooded night riders continue to spread a reign of terror. In North Carolina a secret band, operating under the pretext of law and order, has dragged helpless men and women from their homes, shaved their heads, stripped them and lashed them unmercifully upon their bared backs.

Similar floggings have occurred in Arkansas where a local newspaper has even gone so far as to justify mob action and announce editorially that whipping "has produced results."

We do not believe that the South in general glorifies flogging or condones the whipping of white women. That puts the matter squarely up to local officials—to jail these night riders and teach them that they cannot rule by tyranny and take the law into their own hands.

### Headed For The Gallows—

FOUR months ago (June SDA) Louis R. Shaver, wanted for the murder of his wife in their Oakland flat in 1934, told how an account of his crime published in this magazine eventually hounded him into the hands of police.

For eighteen months Shaver kept his freedom but he knew no peace. Because of the publicity given his case he did not

dare to stay long in one place. The article in this magazine drove him on, seeking new hiding places.

That is all over now. The hunt is ended. Shaver is in jail, sentenced to die—trapped by a magazine article.

### It's Still Murder—

JERRY MAY of Union City, N. J., had always been a good boy. But on last New Year's Eve his temper got the better of him and he hammered to death his 6-year-old cousin, Sergio Sciarra and attacked the boy's father with a penknife.

Jerry, who is 15, may go to the chair. New Jersey has a statute which holds that persons under the age of 16 are incapable of responsibility for crime; but Judge Robert V. Kinkead has ruled that the statute is unconstitutional.

Judge Kinkead based his opinion on the presumption that adults could influence children to commit murder if the law provided no other penalty except confinement as a delinquent.

To take the life of a mere boy is a horrible thing to contemplate; but murder is no less heinous simply because a child's hand has dealt the fatal blow.

*The Chief*

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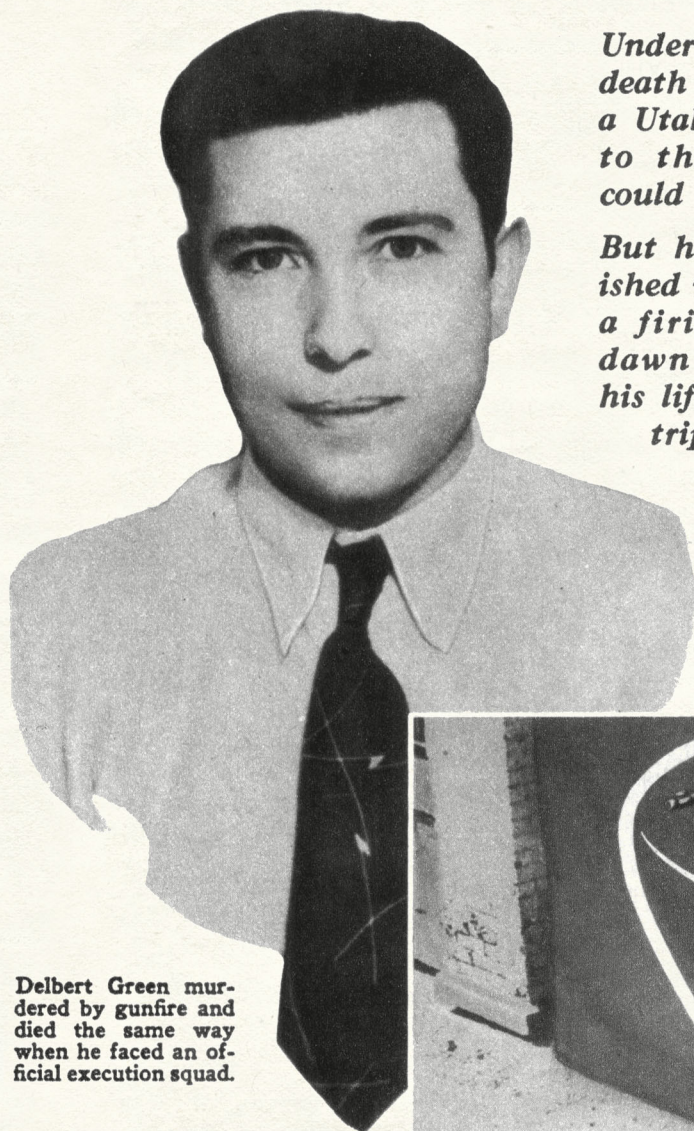
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# KILLER'S DOOM



*Under sentence of death for six years, a Utah killer began to think that he could beat the law.*

*But his hopes vanished when he faced a firing squad at dawn to pay with his life for a brutal triple slaying.*

**T**WICE convicted of first degree murder and five times sentenced to die, Delbert Green, triple slayer, finally paid for his crimes when he died under a volley of rifle fire in the yard of the Utah state prison at Salt Lake City.

In January, 1930, Green's wife left him to return to her mother. Green followed, caught up with her at the home of relatives near Layton, Utah. An argument ensued. When it was over, Green's wife, his aunt and uncle were dead, callously shot down by the cold-blooded slayer.

Found guilty two months later, Green appealed, won a new trial and was again convicted in March, 1932. Then began a virtually endless series of continuances and reprieves.

Relatives appealed for official clemency. Fellow convicts drew up a petition urging that the mass slayer's sentence be commuted to life imprisonment.

But on July 10, 1936, Green was finally doomed. Led to the prison yard he was seated in a chair against the wall. His features were hooded and a paper target was pinned over his heart. Then five rifles blazed and the much-reprieved killer was dead.

Delbert Green murdered by gunfire and died the same way when he faced an official execution squad.

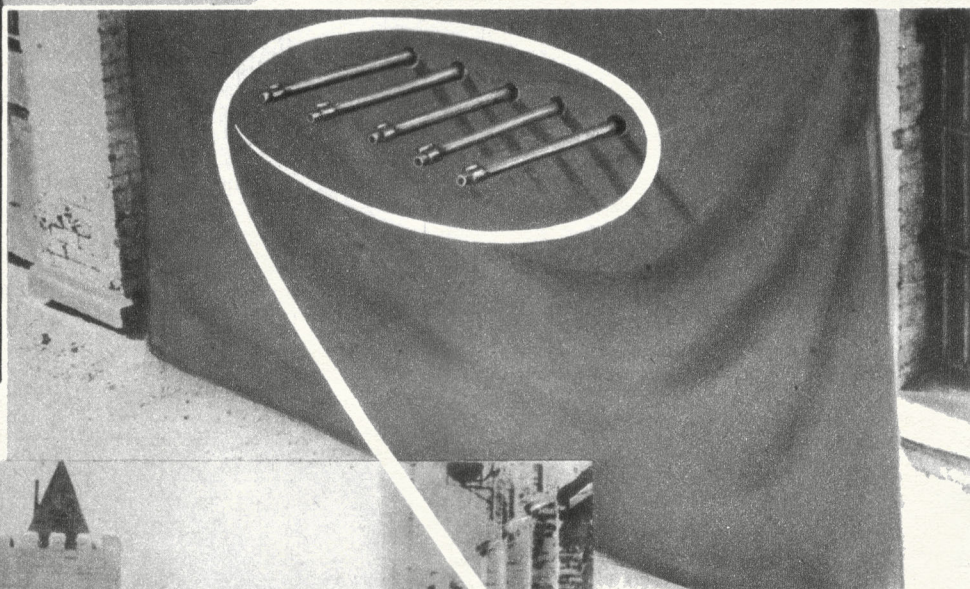
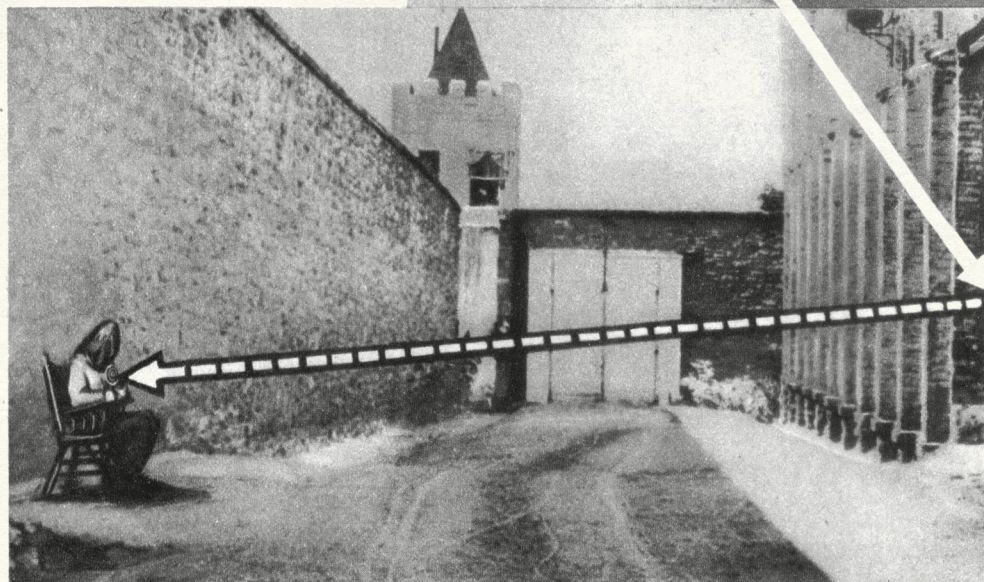


Photo above shows how the execution squad is masked from sight behind a concealing curtain. One of the rifles is loaded with a blank cartridge in order that no one of the marksmen can be certain he fired the fatal shot.



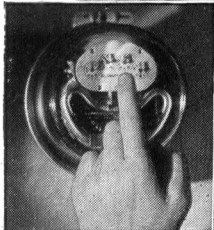
At left, an actual photograph of the scene in the Utah state prison yard when Delbert Green faced the firing squad. The picture was taken just before four rifle bullets tore through the paper target over his heart.



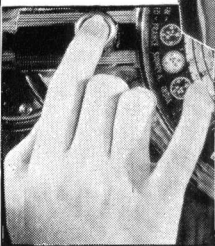
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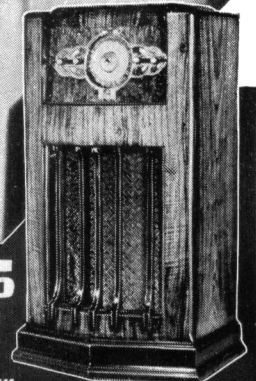
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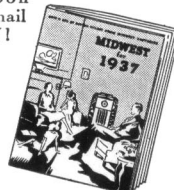
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