

Inside Story Of 'Deal' To Save Heirens From Electric Chair

Guilty Plea After Confession Would Let State's Attorney Ask Confinement Until Death

By CLEM LANE

CHICAGO, July 18.—Here is the inside story of "the deal" to save William Heirens from death in the electric chair.

It explains the seeming contradictions in the case of the 17-year-old University of Chicago student accused—but not formally charged—in the kidnap-murder of 6-year-old Suzanne Degnan and the lipstick murder of Frances Brown, former WAVE, in Chicago.

The apparent discrepancies that have bewildered many people are these:

The published reports that Heirens has made admissions in the Degnan and lipstick murders.

Heirens' denial that he had made any confession.

Statements by State's Attorney William J. Tuohy and the defense attorneys, John and Malachy Coghlan, that there has been no confession.

The discrepancies are more apparent than real when the facts are examined.

Here's the situation:

There is the public—aroused by the Degnan case; demanding a solution, the punishment of the killer.

There are the authorities subject to that insistent demand—State's attorney Tuohy, Police Commissioner John Prendergast, Chief of Detectives Walter G. Storms. Months of earnest, dogged police work have been put in on the case:

Known State's Side

There are the defense attorneys. Mal Coghlan spent 10 years in the state's attorney's office. As an able prosecutor, he knows the state's attorney's side in the case.

There are Heirens' parents—William and Margaret—people in modest circumstances.

There is the youth of Heirens—he won't be 18 until November.

Heirens was seized in a north side burglary. While he struggled with one policeman, a second policeman beat him on the head with a flower pot, knocking him unconscious.

The youth was taken to the Bridewell hospital. Subsequently he was linked to the Degnan case by policeman Thomas Laffey, who discovered that a finger print matched the one on the ransom note left in the girl's room.

Given 'Truth Serum'

Heirens lay in what appeared to be a delirium. Physicians determined his skull had not been fractured; that there was no concussion.

He was given the so-called "truth serum" (denials to the contrary notwithstanding). Under the serum he made certain admissions linking him with the Degnan case. But the purpose of the examination was primarily to determine if he was shamming. He was. Physicians said he was physically fit for questioning. Heirens was taken to police headquarters.

He was questioned by state's attorney Tuohy and his staff; by the police. But Heirens told nothing in these quizes.

He was questioned by State's Attorney and assault charges under threat of habeas corpus action and was placed in the county jail.

Certain Admissions Made

Since then he has talked to his lawyers and to his parents.

In talking with them, he has made certain admissions about the Degnan and lipstick murders (again official statements to the contrary notwithstanding). Men precise and careful about words can do some nice hair-splitting as between "a confession" and some guarded admissions in which more has been left unsaid than has been said.

So there followed the hastily arranged conference between the defense lawyers—the brothers Coghlan and State's Attorney Tuohy and his first assistant, Wilbert F. Crowley, last Sunday afternoon.

There was some skilled shadow boxing between the defense and the state at the 2½-hour conference which came up so suddenly that Mr. Tuohy broke an engagement he had made not long before.

The defense pointed out certain things—Heirens' youth; no Illinois jury had ever sent a lad that young to death; the hesitancy of Cook county juries to inflict the death penalty; the fact that the American mind is averse to the death penalty as witness the many states that have no capital punishment.

State's Case

What was the state's case against Heirens?

Portions of finger and palm prints on the Degnan ransom note. A fingerprint on the WAVE's apartment doorjamb in the lipstick case.

The spelling of the words as "waite" and "safy" on the Degnan ransom note; Heirens' insistence that that is the proper way to spell them, and the discovery in Heirens' school work that he usually spelled wait and safety in that fashion.

(Since the conference George Subgrunski, former soldier, has identified Heirens as a man he saw at 1:30 a. m. Jan. 7 near the Degnan home.)

There is the "hidden" writing on the Degnan ransom note discovered by Frank San Hamel, Chicago Daily News staff artist.

So certain possibilities were discussed:

Heirens might be tried before a jury and found not guilty.

Heirens might be found guilty, but a jury, mindful of his age, might recommend a sentence that would free him after a period of years.

3 Murders Might Be Solved

Heirens might give a written and sworn confession if his life were spared. This is the crux of the so-called "deal."

It was pointed out, too, that if a complete and detailed confession is obtained from Heirens in the Degnan slaying of Mrs. Josephine Ross, the state—meaning the state's attorney and the police—would have

AWAIT HEIRENS' WRITTEN GUILT

Youth Says Revelations 'Must Be True.'

CHICAGO, July 18 (U. P.)—Progress in the state's case against William Heirens, 17-year-old college sophomore, today awaited the taking of a confession in the kidnap-slaying of Suzanne Degnan and two other killings.

The actual confession is the next step in an understanding reached by defense and prosecution attorneys whereby State's Attorney William J. Tuohy has agreed to ask a life prison sentence, instead of the death penalty, in return for a written confession of the three slayings.

Heirens already has admitted the murders orally and it was reported that taking of the detailed confession had been postponed until tomorrow or Saturday because of "publicity" given the agreement.

In addition to the Degnan slaying, Heirens has admitted the brutal "lipstick" murder of ex-WAVE Frances Brown and the knife killing of Mrs. Josephine Ross, an attractive widow.

Talks to Doctor

The youth, under indictment on burglary and assault charges, told a county physician yesterday that revelations of his admissions of the three crimes "must be true."

In his one-sided conversation with the physician, Heirens was quoted as saying:

"Doctor, it's hard for me, sitting around here all day with nothing to do. What charge will they try me on—burglary?"

When Dr. William Haines said he did not know, Heirens continued:

"I'd like to talk to you some time, Doc. I suppose you'll be examining me one of these days. My lawyer told me not to talk to anyone."

Then, after a pause, Heirens commented:

"Gee, you must have a lot to do around here, with all these nuts."

LOCAL BRIEFS

Summer time and youth—problem or opportunity?

The work the Indianapolis police department is doing to combat juvenile delinquency is outlined in the current issue of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin in an article by Police Chief Jesse McMurry.

Citing the growth and accomplishments of the police efforts to combat a wayward youth tendency, Chief McMurry describes the work of the local police in connection with the PAL clubs.

"Not once have the PAL clubs experienced a disciplinary problem of serious proportions within their ranks," the Indianapolis police head points out.

Furthermore, Mr. McMurry asserts to constabulary officers throughout the nation that the outlay of police time and resources for this project has been an "emphatic" paying proposition.

He concludes that the youths have aided the police department time and again "by furnishing information valuable to current investigations."

ENGLAND'S BAKERIES DISREGARD RATIONING

LONDON, July 18 (U. P.)—Militant master bakers from England and Wales, united in defiance of the government's bread rationing program, were scheduled to meet with Food Minister John Strachey today.

Meanwhile, commoners prepared for a free-swinging debate on the question with Winston Churchill leading the opposition.

A mass meeting of the National Master Bakers association voted yesterday to disregard the bread rationing plan. The scheme was denounced as "unworkable."

More than 500 bakers agreed to continue supplying bread and cakes without coupons after July 21, when rationing was scheduled to begin.

ARMY SURPLUS SALE SET

TERRE HAUTE, Ind., July 18 (U. P.)—Surplus government property stored at the Vigo county plant of the army's chemical warfare service today was scheduled for immediate sale, war assets administration regional director Samuel B. Cohen said.

IN INDIANAPOLIS

EVENTS TODAY

Data Theta Tau sorority, Lincoln hotel, all day.

EVENTS TOMORROW

Data Theta Tau sorority, Lincoln hotel, all day.

MARRIAGE LICENSES

McLean County—John W. Berwick; Betty Charles A. Bookwalter II; Billie W. Keast; Merrideth Edward O'Rear; Lebanon Jennie McFadden; John W. Berwick; Billie W. Keast; Eleanor Ann McInnes; R. R. 13, Box 71; John Harkness; 609 N. Highland; Eugene Hayes; 2028 Beloit; Mary Noreen Christian; 1114 Capitol; Norma L. Gibson; 2028 College; Carl Lynn Yancy; 225 N. Alton; Evelyn Virgil Edward Dwinell; 4720 W. Raymond; Marcelline Edna Deason; 4720 W. Raymond; Robert Lawrence; 454 N. State; Ruth Louise Schmid; 1320 N. Delaware; William Jane Barnes; Clayton; Zionsville; N. Indiana; 225 N. Cedar; 2125 Hazel Hatch dr.; 100 N. Alabama; Clegg; Marie Pfeifer; 3786 S. Illinois; William Jefferson Muse; 210½ S. Illinois; Michel Carolyn Osborne; 411 Poplar rd.

Robert Eugene Marendi; 2739 W. 16th; Robert Smith; 2445 N. Illinois; Anna Poula; 3518 N. Pennsylvania; Henry Edward Pfeifer; 210½ W. 30th; John Franklin Daniel; 1242 N. Pennsylvania; Helen May Francis; 1728 N. Meridian; Walter H. Winsor; 3706 Fletcher; Delta B. Tripp; Walnut Hills, O.

BIRTHS

At St. Francis—William, Maxine, Owen, Lynyon, Grace Dearhart; Harold, Francis, Becht, and Osborne; Vanda, Vicki.

Veterans Enjoy All-Star Game With Baseball Czar



Veterans surrounding A. B. (Happy) Chandler, baseball's high commissioner, at the All-Star game last night in Victory Field were among those attending from Wakeman General hospital at Atterbury. They are (left to right) T. Sgt. Arthur Wilson, Muskegon, Mich.; Pfc. Bruno Michalk, Cleveland, O.; Pfc. Sal Giacomazza, Detroit, Mich., and Sgt. Stanley Yurchick, Springfield, Pa.

U. S. SOLDIER MURDERED KYOTO, Japan, July 18 (U. P.)—The provost marshal's office disclosed today that an American soldier was murdered and his body

stuffed into a footlocker only a few feet from the barracks building in which he lived. The identity of the slain man was not disclosed pending notification of his next of kin.

Saw Buddies Blinded, Offers Eyes to World War II Veteran

DETROIT, July 18 (U. P.)—Jim Todd, who saw his buddies blinded in the Argonne forest during world war I, wants to give his eyes to a veteran of world war II who met the same fate.

The 63-year-old former hospital orderly is going to die anyway—"maybe tomorrow, maybe in three months—no longer than five years for sure, the doc says."

He is suffering from a fatal malady.

Mr. Todd went to see Col. Walter E. Cole, head of the Michigan army recruiting district, and asked him:

"Could you please find a G. I. who needs my eyes more than I do?"

"I could help some poor fellow who has gone over for us during the war. I'd like him to have my eyes," he said. "I'm too old. But that doesn't mean I haven't got darn good eyes."

Mr. Todd says he stays at home while his wife, Jennie, 66, with whom he came here from Bowling Green, Ky., in 1929, works in a laundry.

"I do the cooking and the cleaning."

But the new wife weren't twins.

Only cousins.

Elbert and Delbert Doster, 21, married Edna Earl and Theda Webb

Mallard less than 48 hours after their sister wives, Sarah and Irene Whitley Doster, divorced them at Jacksonville.

The sisters charged that the twins

were caught in the act of adultery at the same time.

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