

Grand Jurors to Hear 'Damaging Evidence' On Arsenic Charges

Sheriff Readies Testimony for Hearings in Evansville; Prepare to Exhume Body for Tests

By CLIFFORD THURMAN, Times Staff Writer
EVANSVILLE, Aug. 22—Did Mrs. Clarice Francetti Spurlock poison her own mother with arsenic?

Sheriff Frank McDonald of Vanderburgh County thinks so. He said today the grand jury which convenes before the grand jury which convenes today.

And did Mrs. Spurlock give the same lethal doses to her own father to gain possession of a wife in Memphis, the highly nervous school teacher was later released on orders of Indiana authorities. He is said to have "disappeared" in Memphis without even attempting to communicate with his wife. She said, however, she knew his whereabouts.

Evansville authorities expressed confidence that he would be in Evansville when Mrs. Spurlock arrived.

Persons who knew Mr. and Mrs. Dearing read reports of their daughter's arrest but were cautious in their remarks about their "mysterious" and "strange" deaths.

Typical Hoosier

The 30-year-old housewife was arrested by Memphis detectives early Saturday on a warrant sworn out by Sheriff McDonald.

The sheriff charged Mrs. Spurlock with the murder of her mother, Mrs. Euseice Inez Dearing, 56, Huntingburg, after Dr. Robert B. Forney, Indiana University toxicologist, performed an autopsy and reported he found enough arsenic in the body to have killed her.

Mrs. Dearing died of a mysterious malady in an Evansville Hospital last fall eight days after having gone to visit her daughter.

When Mrs. Spurlock's father, Winter Dearing, 59, died under equally mysterious circumstances five months later, after having gone to live at the Spurlock home and willed his estate to his daughter, Sheriff McDonald became suspicious and caused the mother's body to be exhumed.

Mrs. Spurlock tried to block the autopsy, Sheriff McDonald charged, but he finally got permission from her brother, Bernard, a convicted forger now serving a sentence in the State Penitentiary at Michigan City. The sheriff opened Mrs. Dearing's grave on Aug. 3.

Swears Out Warrant

He received the doctor's report of the examination Friday and immediately swore out the warrant. Mrs. Spurlock, with her husband, Arleigh, 39, was picked up in Memphis after a six state alarm had been sent out.

As Sheriff McDonald prepared to depart for Memphis today to bring his prisoner back to Indiana he announced he was tracking down several clues connecting Mrs. Spurlock with the arsenic death of her mother.

The suspect was described as a gay, party-loving and attractive woman who completely "dominated and ruled" her semi-invalid husband. Acquaintances said she has a forceful personality and while charming and very pretty apparently had few close friends.

Studious Type

Her husband, however, was described as a "quiet, studious type" while engaged as an instructor at Lockyear's Business College, Evansville. He had been ill for several months, however, and did not teach. Neither did he appear much at social functions.

His illness was described as a nervous disorder.

Authorities will seek to have him undergo an examination to determine if any part of his illness can be attributed to arsenic.

Detained for a time with his

C. M. Haffner Dies; Burial Wednesday

Requiescent high mass for Clarence M. Haffner, who died yesterday in his home, 3949 N. New Jersey St., will be sung at 9 a. m. Wednesday in the St. Mary Catholic Church, Ft. Wayne. Burial will be in Ft. Wayne. He was 57.

Born in Ft. Wayne, Mr. Haffner was transferred to the Indianapolis branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1926. He was employed by the railroad 40 years. He worked in the superintendent's office.

Mr. Haffner was a member of the St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church and the Third Order of St. Francis. A veteran of World War I, he was overseas eight months.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Alma Haffner; a daughter, Mrs. Lois Keller, Indianapolis; a son, Richard M. Haffner, Long Island, New York; a sister, Mrs. John Wagner, Ft. Wayne, and three grandchildren.

Allen Webb

Allen Webb, carpenter-contractor and lifelong Marion County resident who died Friday in his home, was to be buried in Crown Hill following services at 2:30 p. m. today in the residence, 5802 Broadway.

Mr. Webb was born near Millersville on the site of the Boy Scout Reservation. Most of his life, however, he spent in Indianapolis. A farmer for many years, he had studied agriculture at Purdue University following his graduation from Millersville High School. He was a member of the Broad Ripple Methodist Church.

Surviving is his wife, D. Estelle Webb.

Mrs. Bettie Lott

Services for Mrs. Bettie Lott, 102 W. Walnut St., who died yesterday, will be at 2 p. m. tomorrow in the Jacobs Brothers' West Side Chapel. Burial will be in New Crown Cemetery.

Born in Dover, Tenn., Mrs. Lott had lived in Indianapolis for 2 years and was a member of the Baptist Church. She was 71.

Surviving are a daughter, Mrs. Pearl Reed, and a son, Percy Lott, Indianapolis; a sister, Mrs. Henrietta Johnson, Clarksville, Tenn.; four grandsons and seven great-grandchildren.

Why You Couldn't Drive on N. Capitol



If you were a motorist driving down N. Capitol Ave. in the 11 a. m. traffic the other day, you probably fumed like all the others and wondered why the police car that had just cruised by didn't do something about this truck, blocking one entire side of the street. The northbound car had room to go through, unless, that is, they met head-on with a southbound vehicle forced into the wrong lane. These commercial "road blocks" are one of the major traffic bottlenecks on industrial N. Capitol.

Hoosierland Traffic Accidents Kill 4, Injure 4; Two Die in Flaming Truck

Five Hoosiers were dead and five others, including an Indianapolis policeman, were injured in a series of week-end traffic accidents, including a spectacular crash at the W. 16th Street Speedway last night.

Three men died when their light truck was struck by a Southern Railway System train 10 miles west of Petersburg and burst into flames.

The dead were Jackie Ray Shepherd, 19, of Oakland City; George Davis Gardner, 24, of Oakland City, and Kenneth Hume, 18, of near Winslow.

State police said Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Gardner died in the flaming truck after the crash. Mr. Hume was dragged for half a mile by the train.

Otto Short, 56-year-old Muncie fireman, was killed early Sunday when his car apparently went out of control on U. S. 35, seven miles northwest of Muncie.

Sheriff W. Pete Anthony said the car traveled 165 feet, crashed through a fence and turned over on the farm of Lawrence Monroe. Mr. Short was alone in the car.

Police said he walked between two parked cars into the path of an automobile operated by Phillip Porter, 63, of 708 Murray St.

He died in General Hospital of brain concussion.

Girl Critically Hurt

A young woman was critically injured in a two-car crash early yesterday on South St.

Police said Miss Thelma Terrel, 19, of RFD 1, Bridgeport, was a passenger in an automobile operated by Chester Miller, 45, of 925 E. 11th St., when it crashed into the rear of a car driven by George Ulrey, 24, of Connellsville, Pa.

Mr. Miller stopped for a signal

leading the field when he was rammed from behind by the runner-up and shoved inside the guard rail towards the officials' table.

All but Gatin scrambled away as the table, timing instruments and records were scrambled by the impact. He was pinned against the post as he tried to leap aside.

Gatin's condition was described as "just fair" at Methodist Hospital.

Frank Ulrey, 72, of 1506 S. Alabama St., died early today of injuries received Friday when struck by a car in the 1300 block of Madison Ave.

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and that Mr. Miller was unable to stop behind him police said.

Miss Terrel was in St. Vincent's Hospital with a fractured pelvis and other injuries.

Policeman Injured

Motorcycle Officer John Mickey, 33, of 1727 Carrollton St., was hurt when his motorcycle crashed into a car he was chasing at Illinois and New York Sts. He was treated and released at General Hospital.

Authorities said Click "talked" after they told him his wife, Marie, 23, and the couple's children, ranging in age from five months to six years were "under a strain" because of the investigation.

Click said her husband was injured in a 1940 auto accident and that his injuries "may have affected his mind."

"Such a thing is impossible to believe about a husband that has been as good as Franklin has been," she said.

Attorneys and criminologists said that but for "slow justice" "horrible mistake" might have been made if Lobaugh had been executed for the crimes he confessed voluntarily. Lobaugh also confessed a third slaying.

Twenty-eight months ago, Lobaugh walked into a Kokomo police station and confessed that he had killed the women here. Lobaugh was sentenced to die in the town of Speedway.

Two of the women whose murderers Lobaugh confessed were the same victims Click says he slew.

The other woman was Mrs. Dorothea Howard, slain in 1942.

Robert V. Christen of Denver, Colo., was sentenced to life imprisonment on a second degree murder charge last April in that case.

Confessed Another

In addition to the Kueff and Haaga slayings, Click also admitted that he killed Phyllis Conine, whose murder in 1944 was never solved, and that he kidnapped and raped Mrs. Simon Sparks, 19, last Wednesday.

It was the Sparks rape-kidnap that snared Click.

Police Check Confession in Lobaugh Case

Farm Worker Admits 3 Sex Slayings Under Lie Test

PT. WAYNE, Aug. 22 (UPI)—

Police planned to take a 30-year-old celery farm worker to the scenes of three sex slayings today to bolster his confession by reconstruction of the crimes.

The slayings, two of them previously confessed and repudiated by Ralph W. Lobaugh, were admitted after week-end lie detector tests by Franklin-Cleek, father of five young children.

Mr. Lobaugh passed his bar examinations and was admitted to the practice of law in Indiana in 1936, although his law degree from Indiana Law School was not awarded until the following year.

Followed 7th Stay'

Click confessed a day after the governor of Indiana granted a seventh stay of execution for Lobaugh, 32-year-old Kokomo factory hand, who originally was scheduled to die in the electric chair nearly two years ago.

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Thomas Blackwell, Lawyer And Flying Enthusiast, Dies

Town Attorney For Speedway

Thomas J. Blackwell Jr., widely known Indianapolis lawyer and attorney for the town of Speedway since 1939, died at 6:30 a. m. today in St. Vincent's Hospital. He was 37.

Admitted to the hospital June 2, Mr. Blackwell had never fully recovered consciousness following an operation June 11.

The son of Thomas J. Blackwell, president of John J. Blackwell & Sons, Inc., Funeral Directors, he attended Holy Cross Grade School and Cathedral High School and graduated from Notre Dame University.

Mr. Blackwell passed his bar examinations and was admitted to the practice of law in Indiana in 1936, although his law degree from Indiana Law School was not awarded until the following year.

Active Democrat

Personal attorney for Mayor Feeney during his two terms as sheriff of Marion County, Mr. Blackwell was active in Democratic work.

He was a candidate for nomination on the Democratic ticket for Superior Court 1 Judge in 1942.

Mr. Blackwell entered the Navy in March, 1944, and was commissioned a lieutenant shortly after completing training at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station.

After more than two years service in the Navy Supply Corps, negotiating contracts with private manufacturers for the Navy, he was honorably discharged April 11, 1946.

Since coming out of the Navy, he had been an associate with Leo Gardner in the law firm, Gardner & Blackwell.

He had been counsel for the town of Speedway since 1939.

Light Plane Pilot

An enthusiastic amateur light-plane pilot, he was a member of the Quiet Bird Club. He was also a member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, Knights of Columbus, Indianapolis Press Club, Athenaeum and Highland Golf Club.

Other fraternal affiliations included membership in the Indianapolis, Indiana and American Bar Associations, American Legion and Voiture Local 40 & 8.

Surviving in addition to his father are his wife, Mabelle Sherman Blackwell, and four children, Thomas III, Judith, Gregory and Margaret (Peggy) Blackwell, who live in 5760 Guilford Ave.

Also surviving are a brother, John H. Blackwell, and two sisters, Mrs. Robert J. Boyle and Mrs. Robert J. Lewis, all of Indianapolis.

Surviving are his wife, Mary; Dorothy Howard, slain in 1942.

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