

Dope Addict Admits Killing N. C. Man

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

FINAL

Largest Evening Newspaper in The Two Carolinas
Charlotte, North Carolina, Friday, January 3, 1958

22 Pages—Price Five Cents



Established Dec. 8, 1888



Two Killed

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP)—A late-running Trailways bus roared across an overpass and sideswiped a disabled tractor-trailer on the Toledo Expressway today. Two persons were killed and 14 were injured.

Blast Ruins Home

KOKOMO, Ind. (AP)—A booster station valve stuck in near-zero cold early today, and the resulting gas pressure was blamed for an explosion that wrecked one home and fired that damaged three others.

Rescue Begins

RABAT, Morocco (AP)—U.S. and French planes and helicopters today joined a rescue team bound for a Rif Mountain hamlet where 50 European tourists were reported snowbound.

Group Sworn

WASHINGTON (AP)—The new six-man Civil Rights Commission was sworn into office today in the presence of President Eisenhower.

Hoffa Ruling

DETROIT (AP)—James R. Hoffa, president-elect of the Teamsters Union, said today local Teamster unions have been instructed to demand inclusion of "hot cargo clauses" in contracts, despite an Interstate Commerce Commission ruling against them.

Guards Missed

BERLIN (AP)—Special Soviet guards failed to reappear in East Berlin today. They apparently had been on the lookout for Russian soldiers who might have deserted during the holiday merrymaking.

Today's

Weather

Fair and cold today, tonight, and Saturday.
Low this morning... 21
Tomorrow morning... 18
High today... 42
High yesterday... 39
High tomorrow... 42
Sunrise today 7:32 a.m.; sunset today 5:23 p.m.

More Weather Data on Page 2-A

CURRENCY CALL
WASHINGTON (AP)—The controller of the currency today issued a call for a statement of the condition of all national banks at the close of business Tuesday, Dec. 31.

—1,200-MILE TRIP FINISHED— Hillary Reaches South Pole

UCKLAND (AP)—Sir Edmund Hillary, first man to conquer Mt. Everest, the highest point on earth, today reached the South Pole at the bottom of the world. He radioed the dramatic news to Scott Base, the Ross Sea point and his party set out on Oct. 14.

After ploughing more than 1,200 miles across the wide, white Antarctic continent, Hillary radioed base that he and his tractor party of four other New Zealanders had arrived at the pole with only one drum of gasoline to spare.

REDHEAD RE-ENACTS SLAYING

Officials Believe Premeditation Out; Reduced Charges

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP)—A red-haired, 22-year-old dope addict today admitted the slaying of Robert W. Lee, 24, formerly of Asheville, N. C., on a lonely Everglades road Dec. 26.

Asst. County Solicitor Quentin V. Long said Miss Mary Lavone Wilburn gave a signed statement to investigators saying she committed the crime. Lee was from Asheville, N. C. He was a 1956 graduate from North Carolina State College.

Earlier, Miss Wilburn accompanied investigators to the scene of the slaying and re-enacted the slaying.

County Solicitor Emerson Alsworth said she will be charged either with second degree murder or manslaughter "since there was no premeditation involved."

Lee, a student engineer with the Florida Power & Light Co. in Miami and a former resident of Asheville, was slain returning from a Christmas day visit with his fiancée, Miss Suzanne Forsee, in Belle Glade, 72 miles northwest of Miami.

Miss Wilburn, of Albuquerque, N. M., said she hitchhiked a ride with Lee from Belle Glade Christmas night.

She said she stopped the car about 34 miles north of Miami, got out to stretch his legs, and while he was so occupied she saw his 22 caliber rifle lying on the back seat.

The young woman, who said she began taking dope while an inmate of an Albuquerque juvenile home, told officers she decided to rob Lee and pointed the gun at him when he got back in the car.

"He told me to give him the gun and I refused," she was saying. "We began sufficing."

LOUD BANG

"I can recall grabbing him by the shirt and then I hit him two times with the gun. Each time there was a loud bang."

"I got very frightened, he fell down. I knelt down to shake him, then I got frightened and ran away."

Lee's body was found at 6 a.m. half in and half out of his car.

Miss Wilburn said she hitched a ride with another driver and went to West Palm Beach where she was picked up New Year's Eve.

Solicitor Alsworth said a first degree murder charge will not be filed because "her motive was robbery. The struggle over the gun leads me to believe it was unpremeditated murder."

Lee's body was found with \$25 to \$30 from Lee's pocket after he was dead.

Investigators said a full confession came after the girl, under questioning for four days, was shown a pair of earrings that had been found near Lee's car.

Skelton Well Enough To Try For Laughs

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP)—Red Skelton feels well enough to joke with his nurses, his physician reports.

The comedian was stricken at home Monday night with cardiac asthma and was taken to St. John's Hospital by firemen summoned to administer oxygen.

Dr. Garth K. Graham said yesterday, "It's just a matter now of continued convalescence."

We were cutting it rather close, the very soft snow," he reported.

At the pole the five New Zealanders joined 17 Americans stationed at the International Geophysical Year (IGY) base of the United States.

Hillary's companions are Murray Ellis, Peter Mulgrew, Jim Bates and Derek Wright. Hillary's party followed much of the 1,200-mile route of Capt. Robert F. Scott of the British Navy, who raced Roald Amundsen of Norway for the pole in the Antarctic summer of 1911-12.

Amundsen won by a month, becoming the discoverer of the South Pole. Scott's five-man party perished on the way back to the coast at McMurdo Sound.

Grocer Robber To Reveal Hiding Place Of \$10,000



(Seated, left to right) J. C. Fant, sheriff of Fairfield County, S. C.; J. P. Stom, chief of South Carolina's State Law Enforcement Division; Hugh McAulay, local attorney; Robert Pitts; Chief Littlejohn (standing); Lt. C. L. McKinnon, of SLED. McAulay is Pitts' attorney.

Pitts: 'I'm Willing To Account For Every Cent'

By DICK YOUNG
News Staff Writer

The man who sought to lose his identity by attempted eradication of his fingerprints but instead became the nation's most distinctive "wanted man" came to Charlotte today.

Robert James Pitts, a North Carolina farm boy who startled the nation's law enforcement agencies by his effort to eliminate his latent fingerprints, was at city police headquarters ready to reveal the location of a cache of money taken in the \$11,500 hold-up of Walsh Ladd, a Salem crossroads grocer in Fairfield County, South Carolina, on Aug. 13, 1949.

Serving 21 years in the South Carolina penitentiary at Columbia after conviction of this robbery, Pitts notified Police Chief Frank N. Littlejohn that he was ready to talk and would disclose the hiding place of the missing \$10,000.

He was brought to Charlotte by Sheriff J. C. Fant of Winnsboro, S. C., in Fairfield County, where the robbery occurred. J. P. Stom, of Columbia, chief of the Palmetto State Law Enforcement Division, and SLED Lt. C. F. McKinnon, also of Columbia.

After nearly three hours of discussion, including a visit with his eight-year-old daughter, Pitts said he was ready to show the officers where the money was hidden.

The group then left the station for an undisclosed destination.

It was not known immediately whether the money was found as Pitts claimed.

The South Carolina officers said, "It's not there our name is mud."

KNOWS PERSONS
Pitts indicated that if the money was not there he knows the persons who got it and the officers can get them.

"I'm ready to account for every cent and I can, too," Pitts said.

Dressed in a handsome blue-gray suit, a Christmas gift from Chief Littlejohn, Pitts appeared only a little older and his appearance was changed only by a crew-cut.

His wife, Hilda, who resides in the N. W. Davidson St. and in early December instituted divorce proceedings against her husband, appeared with her daughter at police station.

Mrs. Pitts and the daughter were seen on page 2-A.

Evening Prayer
Help us, our Father, to remember that Jesus said, "Whoever... shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Teach us the way of humility. In the spirit of Christ we pray. Amen.

N. C. Native, Children Die

OKEECHOBEE, Fla. (AP)—A native of Burlington, N. C., and his four small children were burned to death here last night when their house was destroyed.

Officers identified the victims as Jack W. Shofner, 28, and his children, Mary, 2, and Randy, 4, and Jerry, 2, and Gary, 4 months. Yesterday afternoon their house was destroyed.

Shofner, a native of Burlington, had moved here from North Carolina only seven months ago and was employed as an electrician for the Baker Electric Co. of West Palm Beach.

Shofner's wife, a stepson and another child were not at home. Mrs. Shofner was hospitalized to leg from shock. She was down town during the fire.

Shofner's 5-year-old stepson, his wife's child by a previous marriage, was visiting his grandparents in his home until after the fire was extinguished and they found the bodies of Mary and Jerry in the kitchen.

The bodies of Shofner, Randy and Gary were found in a bedroom.

Cause of the fire was not immediately known and Fire Chief John Godwin said it will wait until a coroner's jury reports before forming a theory.

Shofner was the son of Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Shofner of Burlington. He was a former professional motorcycle racer and was a football player at Graham, N. C., High School.

Funeral arrangements were incomplete.

Stranded In Keys

KEY WEST, Fla. (AP)—Three fishermen from North Carolina, who swam a mile through raging seas, were picked up from Cottrell Key, about eight miles northwest of Key West, by a Navy helicopter today.

The men were identified as Jerry M. Phillips, 21, and James T. Tompkins and Robert H. Leonard, each 28. They had been fishing aboard the shrimp boat Miss Jan, which became disabled in foul weather and sank.

The men reported they stepped fishing about 4 a.m. Thursday and started for port because of the bad weather. The clutch failed and Miss Jan went aground on a reef about seven miles northwest of Key West.

During the day other boats tried to free Miss Jan but their towlines broke in worsening weather.

About 5 p.m. Thursday the men put on lifejackets when Miss Jan appeared on the verge of sinking. The vessel sank and they swam a mile to Cottrell Key where they spent the night with no fire or covering and nothing to eat.

The Coast Guard at Miami notified the Navy helicopter sent two helicopters. A helicopter piloted by Cmdr. Marvin Brock brought them to Key West.

The men were checked at the Navy hospital, found to be in good condition and given food and clothing pending word from the vessel's owner.

AVAS GARDNER
Ava Gardner damaged her beautiful face in an accident in a private Spanish bull ring last autumn and now needs an operation before she can make another movie.

William Hickey, the columnist, gave no source for his story but said:

"Ava has been told she must have an operation, possibly followed by minor plastic surgery. But she is terrified of undergoing the operation and has so far refused to do so."

The accident was said to have occurred when the screen star fell from a horse during a visit to the private bull ring of Angel Peralta, a leading Spanish horse-bullfighter.

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Three To Face Extortion Count

Two brothers and a companion have been arrested near Edenton in connection with alleged extortion attempts involving threats to kill two minor children, according to Charlotte FBI Special Agent M. P. Chiles.

A total of \$5,000 was involved in the alleged extortion attempts. Arrested and imprisoned in an Elizabeth City jail are: William Lawrence Tarkenton, 25, charged with writing threatening letters to two Washington County mothers; his brother, Thomas Nixie Tarkenton, 21; and Fred Franklin Tyson Jr., 21.

The younger Tarkenton and Tyson are charged with aiding William Tarkenton in efforts to pick up money demanded from the two women.

All three young men are from R. L. Roper, in the Pea Ridge section of Washington County.

Mrs. Chiles said letters were written requesting \$2,500 each and threatening the lives of the minor daughters of Mrs. Irene S. Dunbar of Edenton and Mrs. Cedric Davenport of Roper.

Mrs. Dunbar was directed to leave \$2,500 in cash beneath an oak tree in a field near Roper at 5 p.m. yesterday, or else "your daughter will die."

The letter to Mrs. Davenport ordered her to leave \$2,500 under a bridge on the Pea Ridge side of the Albemarle Sound bridge, also under threat of her daughter's death.

The three men were arraigned today before U. S. Commissioner Lloyd Sawyer at Elizabeth City and were bound over to the next session of the Federal grand jury at Elizabeth City.

KKK Comes To Aid Of Men Charged In Gaffney Bombing

GAFFNEY, S. C. (AP)—Two of the five men charged in the bombing of a Gaffney home say the Ku Klux Klan has come to their aid.

The pair said that a KKK meeting will be held at Blacksburg Jan. 11 for the purpose of raising funds with which to engage legal counsel for all five men named in the Nov. 20 dynamiting of the home of Dr. and Mrs. James H. Sanders here.

Boyet and Martin said that "none of us have engaged legal counsel yet."

Boyet continued: "I speak for all five of us in asserting our innocence and we only request a chance to prove it to the people."

Lonesome Pine Road Grounds is owned by Thomas Moss Jr., of Blacksburg.

Moss said he will rent his property to the Klan for the event. He said it had been used by the KKK on a previous occasion.

Moss continued that "the rent is determined by the turnout for the meeting."

Cherokee County Sheriff Julian Wright said last night that he had

Bronchitis? Imprudence? Take Choice

ROME (AP)—Prima donna Maria Meneghini Callas' walkout on the Rome opera and a glittering opening night audience was blamed by her doctor today on a bad case of bronchitis.

But the stormy soprano still was being roundly criticized by newspapers and members of Parliament.

The American soprano refused to continue last night after the first act of Bellini's "Norma." There had been a few catcalls and whistles from the balcony. She insisted she had lost her voice.

Her physician, Dr. Umberto de Martini, came to her defense today. He said she had a high fever and bronchitis and would have to stay in bed for two or three days.

He said her fever was 102 degrees last night when she refused to continue.

Carlo Latini, superintendent of the Rome Opera, told the press Miss Callas had stayed up imprudently late celebrating New Year's Eve.

"I must disclose," he said "that only this morning did I learn — not without surprise — that during New Year's Eve the artist after having completed a general test on 'Norma,' sang 'La Casta Diva' on television and then celebrated the beginning of the new year until a late hour, without observing necessary precautions."

Italy's newspapers and music critics almost unanimously refused to accept the opera's singer explanation. They said she had lost her temper, not her voice.

Almost every front-page headline and critic blamed the walkout on an irritation over the catcalls and whistles.

Tom Wolfe Novel Hit Play In N.Y.

Pictures, Story on 3A

Business... 10-11A
Classified... 6-9B
Comics... 5B
Crossword Puzzle... 11A
Editorials... 7A
Editorials... 4A
Everyday Counselor... 7A
Obituaries... 10A-6B
Radio-TV... 12A
Serial... 12A
Sports... 8-10A
Theater... 4B
To Your Good Health... 5A
Women... 2-4B
Worry Clinic... 2-4B