

McLimans Gets Life on Calkins Murder Charge

A clean-shaven man wearing a blue, short-sleeved sport shirt stood before District Judge D. R. Mounts in Holt county district court Saturday. At 10:28 a.m., the judge pronounced sentence upon the 33-year-old man, father of two small children, who a few days before had confessed the slaying of O'Neill's Police Chief Chet Calkins.

Joseph Emmett McLimans, minus his characteristic mustache, stood motionless as Judge Mounts intoned:

"It is the judgment of this court, that you, Joseph Emmett McLimans . . . are hereby sentenced to spend the remainder of your natural life in the Nebraska state penitentiary, in or near Lincoln, Nebraska, and Lancaster county, Nebraska, at hard labor . . . Sundays and holidays excluded . . . and none of which will be in solitary confinement. You are (further ordered) to pay the costs of this prosecution."

A deep sigh swept across the courtroom from the people packed into the auditorium. A large crowd was denied admittance at the public hearing for lack of seating space.

McLimans' wife, Mrs. Pearl McLimans of Long Pine, put a handkerchief to her eyes and wept. His mother-in-law, Mrs. Alice Coen, also of Long Pine, seated beside her daughter, tried to console Mrs. McLimans but could not contain herself.

Mrs. Chester Calkins, widow of the slain police chief, sat with members of her family. Her face was serious and stern. There was bitterness, but obvious relief was registered when the sentence was pronounced.

Mrs. Calkins had told The Frontier, following McLimans' confession, she felt the slayer of her police officer-husband should be punished to the maximum. She made the statement after the second degree murder charges had been filed.

A bright sun shone through the courthouse windows. Birds darted and chirped in nearby trees as a hush spread over the courtroom when Judge Mounts ordered McLimans to rise from his seat and stand before the bench. Beside the prisoner was Dave Jewell, a young Norfolk attorney, who originally had been engaged to defend McLimans on the larceny charges.

When Judge Mounts opened the court, the prosecuting attorney, William W. Griffin, a man who had a great deal to do with the breaking of the case and gaining the confession, read to the court the charge and the oral admission of guilt.

It was an almost routine proceeding until Mr. Jewell spoke in behalf of the defendant. The defense attorney in general terms classified McLimans as a casualty of the late war, in which McLimans was a B-17 Flying Fortress engineer-gunner. His airplane was shot down over Germany and McLimans existed in a German prisoner of war camp 15 months.

"This same condition could have happened to your son or mine," he told the court. Young Jewell was functioning as a defense attorney in a famous, interest-packed case the like of which some attorneys never experience.

"McLimans was a victim of the time and conditions," Jewell pleaded, "and this man had been trained as an excellent soldier. Sometimes these qualities of an excellent soldier are not those of a good civilian citizen."

Only one photographer was admitted to the courtroom, The Frontier's John H. McCarville. George Hammond, "Voice of the Frontier" announcer, stood in the doorway—neither inside or outside—with his special events microphone. The court had ruled only one camera would be allowed in the courtroom and pictures from that camera were to be made available to all newspapers.

Finally, McLimans was escorted from the courtroom by Sheriff Leo Tomjack, who, like Griffin, had spent hour-on-end on the case. Also escorting McLimans into and out of the courtroom were Capt. H. D. Smith, chief of the Nebraska safety patrol bureau of criminal investigation, and Lt. Harry Brt, head of the patrol's Norfolk area, both of whom had contributed substantially to the solution of the crime.

Judge Mounts had asked Tomjack, Smith and Brt if they had anything further to offer before the sentence was pronounced. All arose from their seats and said crisply, "No, your honor."

Back in his cell, McLimans stared at the walls and contents of his lunch—a life of hard labor in the state penitentiary.

McLimans got his lunch about 1:30 p.m. Sheriff Tomjack said the man was dejected and weeping.

Before the sentence was pronounced, Judge Mounts asked the defendant if he was aware of his legal rights and if he fully understood the information filed

against him and if he had had the contents of the charge explained to him.

"Yes, your honor," came the reply.

"How do you plead?" asked the judge. "Guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty, your honor," came the quivering voice.

"Before passing sentence on this man, I ask the defendant if his admission of guilt and his confession were obtained by bribery or threats?" the judge continued.

"No, your honor," was the slayer's soft-spoken reply to each question. Dave Jewell, the attorney, stood beside the slayer. He responded to a similar question and said he had nothing further to offer.

The fault and tense crowd that filled the courtroom visibly relaxed, all in unison, and the district courtroom began to empty.

The drama, which O'Neillites will talk about as long as they can remember, came to an end.

Brother of Calkins Sees Man Briefly—

Walt Calkins, oldest brother of the slain police chief, had found Chet's body on his tour as night marshal.

Walt now is the chief. And Wednesday night, like Chet used to, he went to the depot to make sure the hotel mail got onto the train for Omaha.

Walt had said, "I want to be the man who gets him."

But he seemed satisfied Wednesday night, even though he had no part in solving the case.

"I didn't say anything to him," he said. "I think it is better that way."

Not Going to Pen Today—

County Sheriff Leo Tomjack said Saturday afternoon he would not be transferring McLimans to the state penitentiary at Lincoln today.

"Possibly in a day or two we've all been so keyed up over this thing that we're going to rest awhile first."

Visited by Priest—

McLimans was visited Thursday midmorning by the Very Rev. Timothy O'Sullivan, pastor of St. Patrick's Catholic church.

The visit was at the request of his foster mother, Mrs. Lillian McLimans, 68, of Norfolk, a devout church woman.

"I want him to repent and clear his soul," she said.

News Tonic to Ill Mayor—

News of the confession was wired as a "tonic" to Mayor J. E. Davis, who is recovering from an operation at Rochester, Minn.

Capt. Harold Smith, head of the criminal division of the Nebraska safety patrol, said McLimans engaged in his car prowling and burglaries to get extra money for his family.

"He was quite a gambler," the captain said.

EXTRA! - McLIMANS TRIAL EDITION - EXTRA

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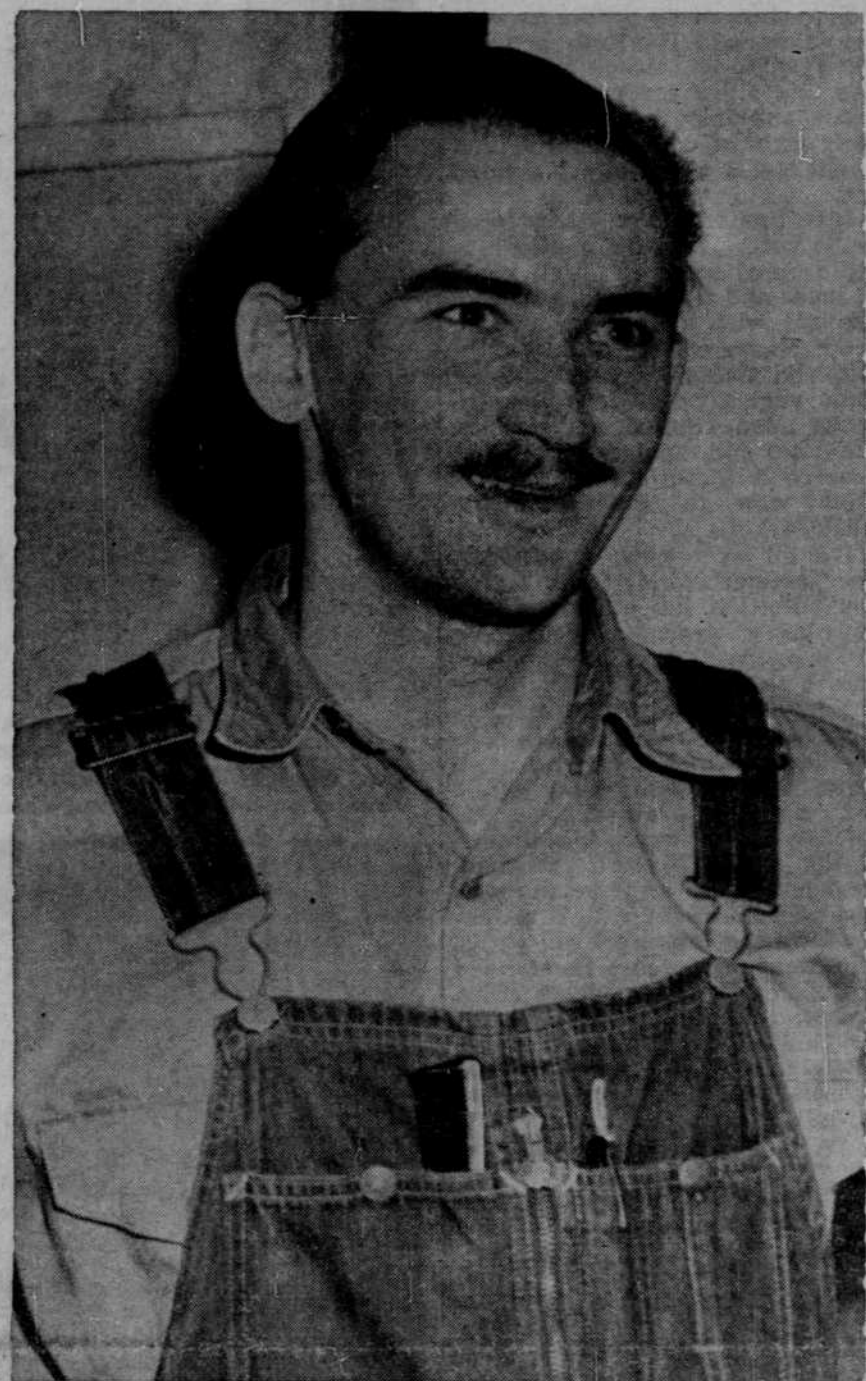
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Seven Cents



Joseph Emmett McLimans, 33 . . . to prison for life.

Slayer's Wife Says: 'I'll Stick By Him'

Mrs. Pearl McLimans, young wife of the slayer, told The Frontier Friday afternoon at Long Pine that she would "stick with her husband." The slayer's mother-in-law, Mrs. Alice Coen of Long Pine, who works at a rest home there, echoed the same sentiment.

Both women spoke to Cal Stewart of "Voice of the Frontier" special events microphone and the contents of the interview were aired in a special program Saturday morning.

The McLimans, dwelling in Long Pine is a few hundred feet west of the depot. An oil tank car literally sat in the back yard when The Frontier reporter called, accompanied by Joe Biglin, "Voice of the Frontier" radio engineer.

Joe McLimans' adopted son, Bobby, 5, and his own 16-month-old son, Don, were playing in a sandpit beside the house. Four neighbor girls had congregated there and play went on—the tender minds completely unaware of the situation.

"Joe wouldn't harm a dog," the mother-in-law said. "I've been riding down the road with him in the car and he'd slam on the brakes to avoid hitting a dog or a chicken. He was not tough. He'd been doing a lot of drinking. Some of the loot that has been found wasn't worth anything. I don't understand it."

The slayer's wife, who had been married before, told The Frontier a bit about Joe's war record.

"He wouldn't talk much about the war," she sobbed. "He did say that on that bombing mission in which his plane was shot down over Germany one of his buddies, who had been wounded, died in his arms."

"He said the food in the German prisoner of war camp consisted of rotten potatoes and stale bread."

"I met him in Long Pine four years ago when Joe began coming into Long Pine as a brakeman on the railroad. We were married in Winner in 1951."

Finally, she scooped up her children and went into the house and closed the door. She (Continued on page 4.)

As the McLimans Trial Comes to a Close



Harold Calkins (front row, third from left), son of the slain police chief, sits in courtroom near his mother (front row, second from right). Another son, Donald, is in the navy and Mrs. Calkins' daughter, Mrs. Walter Lyons, this week was enroute to New Mexico. "We're grateful to everyone for their cooperation and we're glad it's over," said Mrs. Calkins.



The defendant's foster mother, wife and mother-in-law sat in the front row on the right hand side of the courtroom. Mrs. Lillian McLimans (with silver hair and wearing light grey dress) is in the center group. Seated next to her (reading left-to-right) is the slayer's wife, Mrs. Pearl McLimans (wearing dark dress), and seated beside her daughter, weeping, is McLimans' mother-in-law, Mrs. Alice Coen of Long Pine.

The charge of murder in the second degree carries a penalty of from 10 years to life imprisonment.

'No Brakeman Would Do That!'

Joseph McLimans had a habit of sleeping in the caboose of his train at Bonesteel and always parked his car near the depot. Mr. and Mrs. Bill Meyers, Bonesteel depot agent and his wife, live in an apartment on the second floor of the depot and the McLimans vehicle invariably is parked in easy view of the Meyers.

On the night of March 6 the McLimans car was gone. The next day the Calkins slaying was the talk of the town and Mrs. Meyers jokingly accused McLimans, in his presence, of perpetrating the murder.

Authorities did not check with Mr. and Mrs. Meyers until this week when they were checking his story. He had insisted during the interrogation that he had been playing poker that night at Bonesteel, but the contact with Mr. and Mrs. Meyers substantiated he was away.

He subsequently chopped up the suitcase and burned it in the stove in the caboose. He removed the "D.D." plate and threw it in a toilet. The pistol, which was believed to have been gotten in Norfolk, was hidden and authorities have not divulged where it is located.

The "Voice of the Frontier" special events microphone was hastened to Bonesteel Friday after a letter was received from the Meyers, telling details of their contact with McLimans. Mrs. Meyers said McLimans sat in their apartment the morning of the murder and listened

to Cal Stewart telling the news to the world that Chief Calkins had been slain.

McLimans, she said, was unmoved. Finally, when the broadcast was over, Mrs. Meyers turned on McLimans:

"You're the man they want, Joe . . . you drive a late model green Kaiser and you were gone way into the night. You killed Chet Calkins!"

McLimans stared at the floor, shrugged his shoulders and walked away, saying: "You're crazy. No brakeman would do a thing like that!"

The next day—Friday—the

Meyers saw McLimans drive up in his Kaiser. Mrs. Meyers again turned on him, saying:

"Joe, aren't you afraid coming across country in that green Kaiser . . . aren't you afraid they'll pick you up!"

McLimans said no.

Mrs. McLimans was undecided as to whether she will remain in Long Pine with the children. They are Bobby, 5, by her previous marriage, and McLimans' children, Don, 16 months, and Mike, 2 months.

Frontier for printing!

'Best We Know How'

Both in the columns of The Frontier and on the "Voice of the Frontier" radio programs it has been the aim of the editors to treat the Calkins slaying and McLimans trial stories with straight, objective reporting. We have intended also to present the human interest side of the news and relay to our readers and listeners all the facts as they were made available to us under varying conditions and circumstances.

In retrospect, we will look back, perhaps, on mistakes and some slight degree of misinformation or unintentional innuendo. But it has been an honest effort to report the news in the best tradition we know.

If you appreciate this service, we shall be glad to hear from you. Uppermost in our minds, naturally, is the development and growth of The Frontier and fulfilling an obligation to our public. This has been our straight-forward purpose.

CAL STEWART
 Publisher, The Frontier