

# McLimans Gets Life on Calkins Murder Charge

(Reprinted from Our Saturday's McLimans Trial Extra)

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 three days before had confessed the slaying of O'Neill's Police Chief Chet Calkins.

Joseph Emmett McLimans, minus his characteristic mustache, and looking dapper and cool in his grey trousers, 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."

McLimans was standing before the bar of justice, admitting his guilt and facing second degree murder charges.

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.

His foster mother, who had adopted him at the age of 24-hours-old, reflected a broken heart because the man standing at the bar of justice was not the "same boy" she had reared.

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

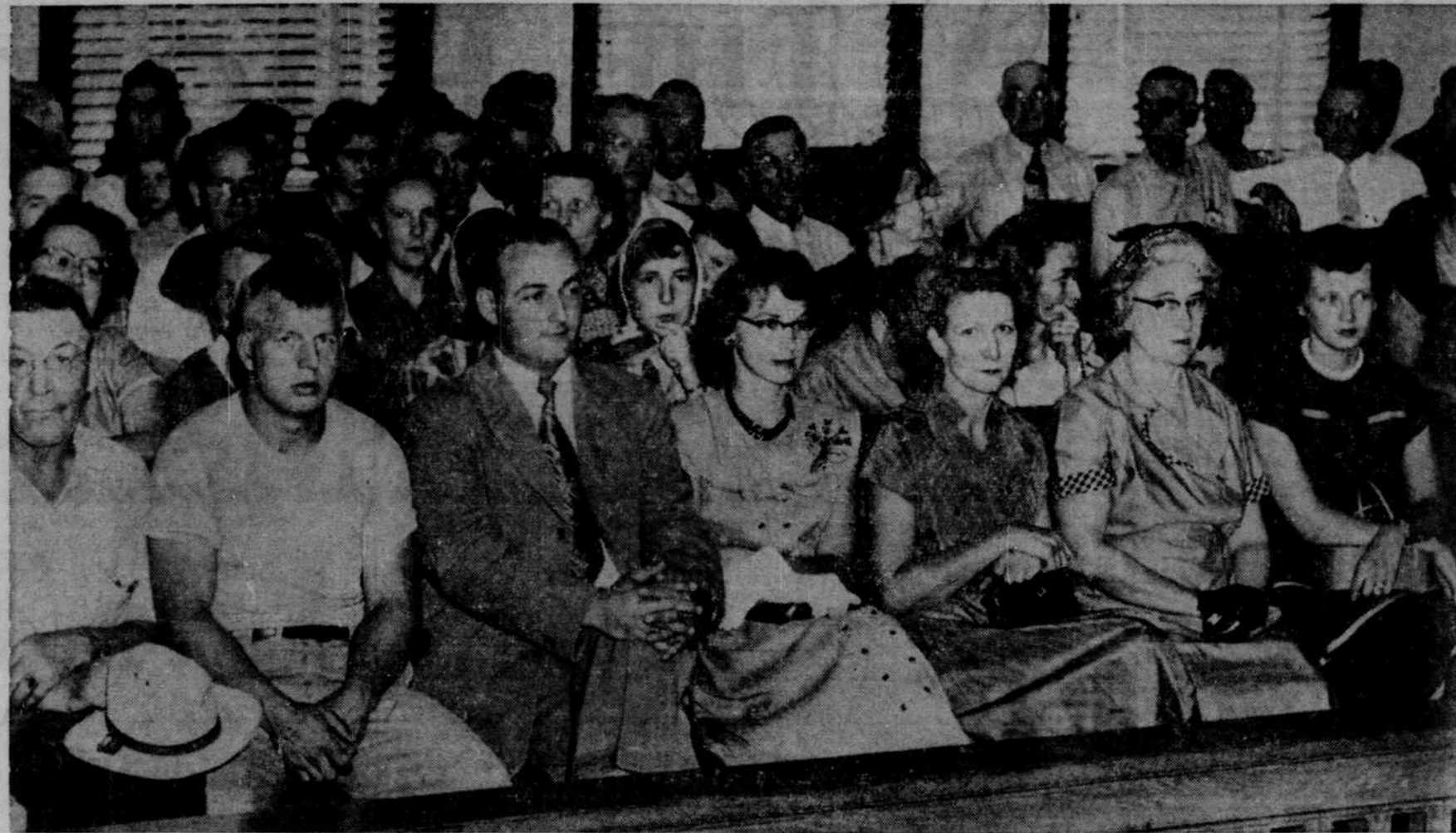
Dave Jewell, a young Norfolk attorney, who originally had been engaged to defend McLimans on the larceny charges.

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.

## As the McLimans Trial Comes to a Close



Harold Calkins (front row, third from left), son of the slain police chief, fixes his eyes on McLimans as the sentence is pronounced. Beside him is his wife, Jean (fourth from left), Mrs. Walt Calkins, Mrs. Chet Calkins (widow of the slain chief) and Miss Pearl McLimans was undecided as to whether she will remain



The defendant's foster mother, his wife and his mother-in-law sat in the front row on the righthand side of the courtroom. Mrs. Lillian McLimans (with light dress and hat and silver hair) is in the center foreground (third from left). She adopted Joseph

"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 contemplated his lunch—and 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. McLimans was escorted from the courtroom. The trial, scheduled to start at 10 o'clock, was five minutes late in getting underway and ended at 10:28.

The taut and tense crowd that filled the courtroom visibly relaxed, almost 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 on the confession 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."

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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.

in Long Pine with the children. They are Bobby, 5, by her previous marriage, and McLimans' children, Don, 16 months, and Mike, 2 months.

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