

# Drama Heard by Radio Audience

"The Voice of the Frontier" went on the air at 10:15 a. m. Saturday with a 45-minute special broadcast in which the background on the murder was reviewed and George Hammond broadcast from the courtroom door. A portion of the text follows, reprinted from Saturday's McLimans Trial Extra.)

## Cal Stewart Speaking from Studio—

In the early morning hours of March 7, 1932, O'Neill's police chief, a man who was beloved by all the kids and a man who was a friend of wayfarers, and even the wayward, was killed in cold-blooded murder. Chet Calkins had been O'Neill's police chief for well over 20 years. He was a man who had been reared here in Holt county, he'd been on the athletic side as a younger man, his friends were legion.

Chet Calkins was a powerful heavy set fellow, 51-years-old. That early morning of March 7, 1932, Chet was seditiously attacked with a death-dealing weapon that in a split-second took the life of a man who never had a chance.

An assassin, whose identity would not become known for one year, three months and 17 days, had emptied five bullets from his .32-calibre pistol into the chief's right side as the chief sat in his cruiser car. Chet Calkins died instantly that cold winter morning. . . there was light snowfall that quickly covered any evidence of the murder. In fact, for an hour or more it was believed O'Neill's likeable, affable, courteous, mild-mannered and model police officer had died from a heart attack.

That tragic murder did something to this town of more than three thousand persons. Feeling ran high for days on end and investigators sought to find the killer of O'Neill's police chief. Leads fizzled out—one after another. The search spread to other states, even to a foreign country. Still the same old story. There were dead ends. The trail grew cold. . . colder even than the fresh snow that covered the murder scene that fateful early morning hour on March 7, 1932, that wee hour when Police Chief Chet Calkins died unmercifully in the line of duty. . . he was brutally killed while the city he loved so well slept.

Wednesday of this week, the 24th of June, 1933, the quest for the killer came to a swift and dramatic ending.

On trial this morning (Saturday) is Joseph Emmett McLimans, a 33-year-old railroad brakeman from Long Pine and Norfolk. Joseph Emmett McLimans, a 5 foot 6 inch fellow, weighing around 140 pounds, is charged with murder in the second degree. He admitted his guilt orally late Wednesday afternoon, he had encountered all the details to Holt county authorities, and this morning he stands before the bar of justice, in Holt county district court.

## George Hammond Speaking from Courtroom—

The "Voice of the Frontier" microphone announced to a startled world, a stunned O'Neill citizenry, that the police chief had been murdered by a strange sadist. Chet Calkins had no enemies. He'd been a police officer for years, he had encountered all types of mankind—the rough-hewn rowdies, dope addicts, gyp-

sies, clergymen, troubled old ladies, other peace officers, travelers who were in need, kids who were off base for this reason or for that reason. He met them all in many different circumstances. And they all respected him.

Chet Calkins' violent and sudden death left a big void in his family circle, a vacancy that never can be filled. His widow bore up well and she had the sympathy, spoken and silent, of every man, woman and child in the town of O'Neill. . . plus . . . uncounted thousands of others who were bitter and grieved. He left two sons and a daughter.

Harold, the eldest son, is a fine citizen, he travels on the road for a wholesale tobacco company. Donald, a star athlete in high school, performed on a basketball floor, in a tournament, before his dad's own eyes, on the eve of the murder.

Don now is in the navy getting specialized training. Chet's daughter, Jean, is married, is a young mother, and this week, while this momentous news was unfolding, she was enroute with her husband to New Mexico to make her home. Chet left other relatives, too, including a brother, Walt, who promptly was promoted to police chief to fill the vacancy created by a heartless, cold assassin.

The clues were meager and the columns of The Frontier were filled week-after-week with stories that filled readers with suspense and hope—yet threaded their way only into infinity. You might say a blind alley—a dead end.

Investigators were frustrated to be sure. The slow, meticulous build up of evidence on all kinds of leads and tips would suddenly explode with a dull, resounding thud. Hours of toil meant nothing, and the privacy of lives of some very good citizens was imposed upon, studied, and, finally, the notes and memorandums that concerned those citizens made their way to the inevitable wastebasket.

It's all over now, apparently. For Joseph Emmett McLimans, who has admitted his guilt this morning a crowded courtroom looks on as the shamed, confessed slayer of O'Neill's police chief stands before justice.

In his confession, McLimans told how he had finished a day's work at Bonesteel, S.D., while working as a brakeman on the Bonesteel to Winnetka branch of the North Western railroad. He customarily slept in the way car, or you might call it a caboose, in the Bonesteel rail yards. The night of March 6 he climbed into his car, a late model, a green Kaiser, and drove to Spencer. He said he was hunting for a poker game, he visited several taverns, and then continued to O'Neill. Most of you know the story, having heard several of our special "Voice of the Frontier" broadcasts and having read it in The Frontier as well as the dailies.

He visited two or three O'Neill taverns, did some more drinking, went to his car, was annoyed because another vehicle had parked in such a manner it was awkward to free his own car. He looked inside that ill-parked machine, so the confession goes, saw a blue overnight case. . . took it. . . put the case in own car. . . finally pulled away and went to the edge of town. He took some money from the purse, drove back into O'Neill, restored the clothes loosely on the floor of the same car from which the case

had been taken. By now it was later in the evening and he sat on Everett street, about midway between Third and Fourth streets, drinking some beer which he had purchased in a tavern. Meanwhile, Police Chief Chet Calkins had received the report of the stolen suitcase.

Chief Calkins' car came down an alley, not a stone's throw from O'Neill's main thoroughfare. He turned south on Fourth to Everett street, spotted the McLimans car and the man lingering in the dark. The chief made an inquiry by asking what he, meaning McLimans, was doing. The man responded by saying he was drinking beer. Chief Calkins asked if he could inspect the car. And in the trunk the stolen suitcase was discovered by the police officer. He ordered McLimans to get into the cruiser car and accompany him. The chief, who may or may not have recognized McLimans, seated himself first. McLimans went around, began to get into the cruiser car. Instead he flashed his gun, in an instant he sent five shells into the chief's body at point-blank range. The range was so close there were powder burns on the chief's coat and arm. . . the interior of the car muffled the shots and the heinous crime had been committed. This raises a question: Why was this man carrying a loaded gun? McLimans, so his confession goes, got into his own car and drove west several blocks. He parked his car and told authorities about walking eastward down an alley—the same alley the chief's car had traveled only a few minutes before. When he got to the rear of the Shelhamer store, he could see, across the way, the dark lifeless cruiser car. With no leaves on the trees, and with new snow on the ground, he could see there was no activity. He waited. . . and waited. Finally, he decided to enter the rear of the implement store—and he did. He scooped up some change from the cash register. He emerged from the store and stared through those cold eyes across one hundred yards of freshly laid, light, fluffy snow. Still no activity. Then he became very brave, so it would seem. He walked over to the cruiser car. He saw the body slumped there, the chief's flashlight investigation through to its head of his victim leaning against the steering wheel.

Then, and we're reciting from the confession, McLimans walked to his own car, several blocks away, and drove away into the night.

It is possible that before we leave the air with this special broadcast we might bring you from the courthouse the results of the trial now in progress. We'll continue with our story following this announcement.

The man who killed Chet Calkins spent the remaining hours of that night in that red caboose in the Bonesteel railroad yards.

Next morning, the "Voice of the Frontier" came on the air. Cal Stewart was doing the announcing in a special broadcast. He told the hastily pieced-together story. . . and, I might say, I've played back that recording a number of times, and the story was accurately written and told. I wish time permitted us to replay that for you now.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Meyers, the depot agent and his wife at Bonesteel, invited McLimans into their apartment to hear on radio the story of the Calkins slaying. The Meyers say he sat there, motionless and unmoved. Mr. Meyers had known Calkins over a period of years. When the broadcast was over, he said, "I hope they catch the killer."

Mrs. Meyers turned on McLimans and accused him, outright, of murdering Calkins. She said to him. . . you drive a green late model Kaiser. . . that's what they're hunting for. . . you were gone last night. . . you're the man!

Friday morning we received a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Meyers. Cal Stewart and Joe Biglin, our engineer, promptly set out for Bonesteel. They stood in front of the caboose and talked with the Meyers. Joe Biglin, the radio technician, complained about the wind beating into the microphone, but here's the story, by tape recording. (See page 5).

Much Written and Said— After the confession was gained from McLimans late last Wednesday afternoon, much has been written and said about him. We conducted interviews here with County Sheriff Leo Tomjack, with Captain Harold Smith, chief of the Nebraska safety patrol bureau of criminal investigation, and with Lieut. Harry Brt, who is in charge of the Norfolk area office for the patrol.

They told of the investigative work. . . the long, hard, and trying search for the killer. They told how a series of robberies, in recent months, led to the killer's undoing. He broke into a Norfolk implement store one evening, around 8:30. And it was in Norfolk, his home town, he was captured February 18 of this year. The main thing about McLimans that interested O'Neill investigators was the fact he owned a late model Kaiser. Then the story began to unfold, but not until after McLimans had spent about two months in the Madison county jail and had spent several weeks in the Norfolk state hospital under observation. Finally, he was brought to O'Neill and within a very few days, and under careful, prudent and fair questioning, he bared his story, he said he killed Chet Calkins.

One person's voice you haven't heard on our special events mi-



George Hammond, "Voice of the Frontier" announcer, talks in the lobby with Joe Contois killed him." Contois told kind of a fellow O'Neill, formerly of Clearwater. "I knew Cal-



Coffee hour after confession . . . (from left) Capt. Harold Smith, Sheriff Leo Tomjack, Mrs. Leo Tomjack, Lieut. Harry Brt, County Attorney William Griffin, Deputy Sheriff Jimmy Mullen and Jim Willam.

crophone either at the time of the slaying or, even now, that the confession has been gained and the investigation through to its high judge in this section of north Nebraska. I refer to the voice of County Attorney William Griffin.

Bill has spurred on Sheriff Tomjack, he has been dogged and determined with some matters pertaining to the safety patrol and other peace officers. Please understand, cooperation was always fine and everybody tried to be helpful, but somebody, some force has to be in the driver's seat. Bill Griffin never relented, and he guided the investigation through to its climax and is the prosecuting attorney in the courtroom.

McLimans' foster mother, Mrs. Lillian McLimans, the woman who took her adopted son from an orphanage at the age of 24-hours-old and reared him, repeatedly has thanked Mr. Griffin for being kind and courteous—now that the investigation is over and the confession gained.

The investigating officers have been universal in their classification of McLimans as a cold, sharp, featured fellow with devious eyes, a scraggly mustache, a lone operator and a strange fellow.

The foster mother, upon descending the courthouse steps after she had first heard the confession from her adopted son, and then urged him to tell it all, pointed to the cell upstairs and said, "That's not the boy I raised. He's changed. He's different. I raised a good boy. She blamed the war. McLimans was a gunner on a Flying Fortress.

Police officers and the prisoner's foster mother share some of the same ideas concerning McLimans who is standing trial this morning in that crowded courtroom.

Every man is loved somewhere by someone. Let's listen to Cal Stewart again, speaking by tape-recording.

(Stewart then interviewed in Long Pine the wife, Pearl, and the mother-in-law, Mrs. Alice Coen. See article, "Wife Will Stick By Him," page 5 of this

Varied Opinions of McLimans— There you have a word picture of the man. . . you know the deed. . . you've heard how the police and his foster mother feel about him. Perhaps you heard the McLimans children. . . two of them were playing in the sand-pile and the third, a tiny baby, is only one-month-old. Thursday afternoon authorities took McLimans out of the cell and they visited several points, accumulating some of the loot. They also took him to his nondescript home, a cluttered up affair alongside the railroad tracks at Long Pine, just a few hundred feet from the rail station there.

McLimans then saw the new baby for the first time. Mrs. McLimans, the wife of the confessed slayer, wouldn't discuss with Cal the murder. . . or the robberies. . . in fact, she declined to talk at all if he asked any pertinent questions. That explains the nature of some of his questions. But she insists she'll stay by her husband till the end. And the mother-in-law says the same thing.

This morning, the day that is expected to climax this story, dawned bright and clear. There's not a cloud in the sky and the courtroom filled to capacity well before the trial was to begin.

## Slayer's Record Sordid Story

(Continued from page 1) seized a large quantity of stolen goods under a search warrant at the McLimans' home in Long Pine, these articles were placed in a vault in the courthouse at Ainsworth. They were seeking to build a case on the robberies which would eventually connect him with the slaying—and that's exactly what happened.

The confiscated loot included a pistol, camera, binoculars, electric razor, pen and pencil sets, antirust, wax, polishes, saws, gun cleaning equipment, solder, ing gun, pistol-grip compression tester, electric fans, saw blades, windshield wiper blades and an assortment of other articles.

The next phase of the investigation took place February 25 in Norfolk at the home of Mrs. Lillian McLimans. A Madison county deputy sheriff handed her the keys to McLimans' car at the door. The troubled foster mother was aware an investigation was going on, but had no idea her son was suspected of the grievous slaying of Calkins.

She said he had a large quantity of assorted brands of cigarettes and a few changes of clothing at her house.

Thursday, February 26, McLimans was brought into district court at Madison and was ordered committed to the Norfolk state hospital for observation and a report on his mental and physical condition. He was not taken to the hospital until Saturday, February 28, however.

Friday, February 27, Sheriff McCarthy and Sergeant Carlsle decided to try to get a statement from McLimans about a long list of robberies. They went to the county jail and asked McLimans if he wished to make a statement. He told the officers he would tell all he knew.

They then took McLimans to the jury room in the Madison courthouse where a statement was taken in the presence of Miss Florence Neidig, a stenographer and notary public.

The result was a statement, 22 typewritten legal-size pages. Both McCarthy and Carlsle participated in the questioning. In the statement McLimans admitted stealing a box of tools, which had been found at his home in Long Pine, from a panel truck in Norfolk. The camera he said he bought for a dollar from "two little kids" whom he encountered playing with it on South Fourth street in Norfolk.

He said the name had been "scratched off" when he got it. He said that when he went into the air force he was under parole to an official in Omaha, but this was cancelled when he went into the service. (Although the facts were not mentioned in the statement taken from McLimans, he became a turret gunner in a bomber during World War II and was shot down over Germany and served 15 months as

a prisoner of war of the Germans.) After he returned to Norfolk from Europe McLimans said he worked for Joe Maas, former Norfolk grocer. He denied that he ever stole anything from his employer.

In answer to further questions, McLimans told Sheriff McCarthy and Sergeant Carlsle that he left Joe Maas' employ and went to work for the American Legion club where he worked six months or so.

About his Legion club employment McLimans said: "They caught me breaking into the slot machines; I mean playing them for nothing. I didn't break into them. I played them for nothing and I got the money out. In the long run they gave me the money back. I found a way to beat them."

In answer to the question, "When was the Legion club broken into?" McLimans replied, "I didn't have anything to do with that."

Asked what other towns he had "pulled jobs" in, McLimans replied, "Ainsworth."

He stated that he broke into the hospital at Ainsworth in February or March, 1932. He said he took "seven cases of SMA" and some baby powder and baby oil from the hospital.

Next McLimans said he entered the Jones Implement company at Ainsworth and took a motor heater. He said he raised an unlocked window and crawled in. He denied taking anything else there.

At that point in the questioning, McLimans insisted that these were the only two places he had entered, outside of Norfolk.

In Norfolk he admitted stealing tire chains from the Phillips 66 station, where he said he looked in the open cash register for money, but there was none in it. Then he said he broke into the Schlueter Implement company "the first time" when he got "about \$14 or \$16 in cash," a large electric fan, a large extension cord and some wrenches.

McLimans then added, "I got something else at that place. A toy tractor, and a little toy hay-baler. They were toys. I got them for the kid."

When McLimans broke into the Schlueter Implement company a second time, last February 18, he was caught there by William Schlueter, the owner, and arrested.

The next robbery McLimans admitted was at Van's Super Service on South First street, Norfolk. There he said he took "two or three" inner tubes, some cleaning wax to polish his car and a case of six gallons of antifreeze. He said he entered this

service station through an unlocked north window. He denied taking several other articles the officers asked him about.

McLimans was then asked about an electric razor in a case, one of the articles found in his home. He said he stole it from the Geist drug store in Norfolk and also took three pen and pencil sets and some deodorant there.

The suspect told the officers he didn't break into the Geist drug store. He said he went in while the store was open "and walked around and went into the basement and I got locked in. I was down in the basement and it was about closing up time when they locked the back door." He said he took some of the articles from the basement and some from the store itself.

As the two officers pursued their questioning McLimans told them he had taken rolls of tape from a railroad box car and some door handles and catches "from the lumberyard at Bassett."

Several other articles, including a power saw, some guns, an RPM checker and electric hacksaw, a sander and buffer, McLimans claimed he had purchased from the Master Mart in Norfolk. Later the officials learned that the Master Mart did not handle and had never handled the makes of guns which McLimans had in his possession.

Other Norfolk firms from which McLimans admitted he stole various articles of equipment and tools were the U and M Motor company and the Schmode Implement company. He said he entered the Schmode building through a paint shop window and stole a case of motor oil, windshield wipers, a bumper jack and other automobile accessories he said he stole from cars in Norfolk.

As the questioning proceeded McLimans said he took a new tire tester from Schlueters and some rubber floor mats from Van's Super Service. As various items were mentioned at times he seemed to recall articles he had forgotten, and talked fairly freely about where he had stolen them.

A \$45 rod and reel set he claimed to have purchased from "some guy" for \$12. Asked if he didn't think the set might be "hot" at that price, McLimans said, "I had a hunch."

The large quantity of cigarettes and gum found in McLimans' home at Long Pine he insisted he had purchased.

"I bought all the cigarettes myself. It may seem funny, but I did," he said. He also said he had bought the gum and the cigarettes "a year and a half or two years ago. I bought the gum that long ago, maybe not the cigarettes."

The loot found at McLimans' home in Long Pine included 50 boxes of 12-gauge shotgun shells and 1,500 rounds of .22 calibre ammunition. He said he got "some" of the shotgun shells, "two or three boxes" at the Bassett lumberyard, and some of the

rifle shells also. He claimed he had bought the remainder. Several articles, including a desk pen set, a drill gun, box of drills, pliers and a hacksaw, McLimans claimed he found "in a freight yard."

McLimans also said he had purchased a large quantity of sardines which had been found, "because I like sardines." He named several Norfolk grocery stores where he said he purchased them, as well as a market in Long Pine and at Bassett.

Asked about a table model radio, McLimans said, "I found that when I found that tool box and desk set." Later he identified the "freight yard" as being at Fremont, "where I worked about two weeks this summer." McLimans denied that he ever broke in anywhere in Fremont, insisting he had "done jobs" only at Norfolk, Ainsworth and Bassett.

Filed keys which were in the tool box McLimans said he had made "one day when the kid locked the padlock on the tool box, so I made me a key to open it." He denied trying to use the keys to enter doors.

A revolver McLimans said he "bought from some bum when I was working at Fremont. I bought it before or after I found the stuff. I think I gave him \$10 for it."

McLimans claimed he had traded one shotgun for another at the Master Mart and had bought a tubular repeating rifle from Montgomery Ward company at Norfolk. Another pistol he said he bought for \$80 at the Master Mart "four or five years ago."

Asked if he had ever registered any of the guns, McLimans said, "No. I was told I didn't have to. I went to the police station and found out."

McLimans said he had tried to sell the antirust himself, but had been unable to do so. He said he later gave it to a bartender at Long Pine to sell for him. He said he told the bartender that he had bought it.

Concluding their questioning and McLimans' statement, Sheriff McCarthy and Sergeant Carlsle asked: "In all these break-ins and robberies, were you alone or did you have anyone with you?" "I was alone."

"At all times?" "At all times."

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