

# MAKING THE PRISONER CONFESS

*It has been the habit of brutal police officers to wring a confession of crime from a suspected person by torturing him until in desperation he told something just to get relief. The newest practice in this method is called the "silent third degree," described here*

**S**UPPOSE that you went to a strange city next week to hunt a job, and that by sheer accident you were picked up by the police as a suspected murderer. Inasmuch as you would have no acquaintances, it would be very hard for you to prove an alibi. So likely as not the police, being quite as eager to give evidence of their alertness by securing a conviction as to get at the truth and secure justice, would give you what they call the "third degree."

According to a writer in the New York Herald, with the third degree the public is well acquainted through short stories, articles, novels and the drama, but there has developed of recent years a test more grimly nerve racking, more crushing and relentless—the "silent third degree"—to the study of which penologists and psychologists are giving much time and thought. In the opinion of some it is more unjust than the older form of bullying questioning. Others declare that it is a true test—one which wrings the truth from the subject more certainly than all the questioning in the world, and he goes on to explain how the silent third degree works:

### The McNamara Case.

One of the most notable cases of the practice of the silent third degree was in the Los Angeles Times dynamiting case. James B. McNamara was on trial. The prosecution had developed a strong case against him, but the man's nerve was wonderful.

It was Samuel L. Browne, chief of the Los Angeles secret service bureau, who directed the grueling daily presentation of witnesses who spoke not, nor were spoken to, but who merely filed into the court room, caught the eye of J. B. McNamara, shot him a glance of recognition and then, unquestioned by counsel for either side, left the room.

Women with whom McNamara had associated, hotel clerks who had seen him register under false names, cabmen who had driven him to places where detectives contended he had met fellow conspirators in the dynamite plot—all those were marshaled by the secret service men and paraded before the prisoner.

Vividly, realistically, almost as if with a moving picture film, each step in the accused dynamiter's journey from Indianapolis to Los Angeles, each stage of development of the plot, was called to his mind, and, what was worse, there was the suggestion that the prosecution knew all. Every time three or four witnesses who J. P. McNamara knew could testify damagingly against him entered the courtroom and bowed to him in recognition the thought was crushingly impressed upon his mind that another step in his career was known.

One of these silent witnesses was the mail clerk who had time and again handed mail to McNamara at the general delivery window and had known him as J. B. Bryce. Imagine the effect on the guilty man when he saw that the mail clerk recognized him.

There were cabmen who had driven McNamara about, and one of them had quarreled with him. Finally a woman, plain and rather shabbily dressed, white and timid, was ushered into the courtroom. She sat in one of the front seats and gazed at J. B. McNamara.

### How the Silent Third Degree Works.

That woman had sold him wrapping paper in her store, and in her presence he had wrapped sticks of dynamite in it.

As the supreme test, the crushing denouement, McNamara was confronted by the last living person who had seen him before the dynamite explosion. It was the bartender who had sold McNamara a drink just before he slipped through the swinging door of the saloon back into Ink alley and placed the dynamite which destroyed 22 lives.

"I'll tell you what this 'silent third degree' does. It weakens a man's conscience. That's the underlying principle that makes it effective," said George S. Dougherty, formerly in charge of the New York police detective bureau. "Look here, I'll tell you how it works.

"A man is arrested for a grave crime—murder, perhaps. He sees no witnesses when he is arrested. He is at bay, desperate, fighting for his liberty and maybe for his life. He steals himself and throws about him an armor of bravado or unconcern or taciturnity. His nerves are like steel fibers, and you can't shake them. If you should bully him he would become sullen and resistive. If you should threaten he would become defiant. He might be open to reason, but suppose he were not.

"When he is arraigned before a magistrate there may be several witnesses there whom he recognizes and who, he knows, will recognize him. When he has been first arrested he has told his mother and his wife and his friends that he is innocent. The lie means nothing to him then, but when he sees all these witnesses who are connected with his crime in different ways he begins to realize that he may be forced to admit his guilt and that these persons are going to make him out a liar before the friends and relatives who have stuck by him. That is the beginning of the break, and it reaches a type of man you can't bully or hoodwink into a confession."

### Setting Stage for Geidel.

On July 27, 1911, William H. Jackson, a broker of New York, was found murdered in his room at the Iroquois hotel, in the heart of the club district of New York city. He had been beaten and strangled and a bottle which had contained chloroform was found on the premises.



About the only information the police were at first able to develop was the fact that the murderer must have entered the room from the fire escape. There did not seem to be the slightest evidence as to the identity of the intruder. The bottle which contained the traces of chloroform bore a label, however, and detectives working on the case traced it to a druggist in Newark.

This man stated that he had sold the drug to a Mrs. Kane, and gave her address in New York city to them.

Meanwhile police working in the city had become suspicious of Paul Geidel, a bellboy, who had been discharged from the Iroquois a few days previously. When they learned that he was living in a room which he rented in Mrs. Kane's apartment their suspicions were strengthened, but there was as yet nothing on which to hold the boy. He had not been seen by anyone on the premises where the crime was committed since his discharge; still, certain information which came to the hand of George S. Dougherty, at that time deputy police commissioner in charge of the detective bureau, led him strongly to believe that Geidel was the murderer.

The deputy commissioner himself, together with Detectives Thomas Van Twister and Dominick Reilly, went to the apartments of Mrs. Kane, a pretty woman, who earned a living as hairdresser. As they entered Mrs. Kane's sitting room Geidel and Patrick McGrane, another bellboy, were sitting with her.

Dougherty told Mrs. Kane that he wished to speak to her alone on an important matter. The other men said nothing, but two of them went into adjoining rooms, each with one of the two boys. They each attempted to question their custodian, but he would not speak, not even admitting that he was a detective, although the youths must have known it, and this silence multiplied their fears.

Mrs. Kane in a very frank manner admitted that she had bought the chloroform and said that she used it in the treatment of hair.

"Have you still got that bottle of chloroform in the house?" asked Dougherty.

"No," she said; "it has gone."

"Where?" asked Dougherty. Mrs. Kane at first hesitated, but by adroit questioning the commissioner learned from her that it had disappeared from the shelf in the bathroom. After learning all that he cared to Dougherty produced the bottle.

"Was that yours?" he asked.

Mrs. Kane said that it was and became very much alarmed. The detective reassured her. "All I want you to do," said Dougherty, "is to answer my questions again, just the way you have this time."

Then he sent for McGrane, who was in the next room with Geidel. After a few unimportant questions he said to McGrane: "Now, all I want you to do is to sit here quietly. Don't say a word, and if Geidel looks at you make no sign or sound unless you want to get into trouble yourself."

McGrane, thoroughly frightened, took his place on a chair the detective offered to him. Stepping to the table, Dougherty turned down the oil lamp, which had a red shade. Then he drew the curtains, shutting out the twilight, which heightened the effect of the red-shaded lamp. Every bit of furniture was placed by the detective so that the effect he was striving for would be enhanced. No stage director could have exercised greater care in the arrangement of details.

He sent for Geidel. Reilly came in with him. The bellboy was seated in a chair which directly faced the door to the bathroom, where Dougherty had already replaced the empty bottle of chloroform.

"Mrs. Kane," said Dougherty, "did you purchase a bottle of chloroform from a druggist in Newark about ten days ago?"

"Yes," said the woman.

"Why did you get it?"

"I use it in dressing hair," Mrs. Kane replied.

"Did Paul know that you had this drug?"

"Yes, he did," admitted Mrs. Kane, who was so seated that the light from the lamp shone on her head and features, making them the most distinctive things in the room, and Geidel seemed unable to take his eyes from her face. He smiled with a certain amount of bravado as the questioning continued.

"Did Paul ever say anything about the drug? What were his words?"

Mrs. Kane looked impudently at Geidel, but either she did not dare not to answer or her wish to tell the truth was stronger than her sympathy for the boy.

"He asked me if there was enough chloroform in the bottle to kill a man," she said. "I told him there was, and asked him why he wanted to know. 'Oh, I might want to take some if things don't go right with me,' he replied, laughing, and I thought that he was merely joking in a grim way."

"Is that bottle still in your possession?" asked the detective.

"It is," said Mrs. Kane. "At least, I have not used the drug, and it must be there."

"Where?"

"On the shelf in the bathroom."

Turning to Dominick Reilly, the detective asked him to look for the bottle.

Geidel's face showed the first signs of alarm.

"Here's the bottle," said Reilly, "but it's empty!"

"I thought you said you hadn't used it," said Dougherty to Mrs. Kane, sharply.

The bellboy's eyes started from their sockets. He had believed the bottle destroyed or lost. He sank in his chair. McGrane did not return the glance of inquiry his friend shot toward him. How much did the detectives know? Geidel looked first at one face, then another. The reddish glow on Mrs. Kane's features showed the anguish she was in. Paul knew she was fond of him. She must be suffering so because she had been obliged to tell all she knew about the chloroform. McGrane's features were stolid. Geidel knew what he had told his friend, and to him this meant that the friend had betrayed him.

Reilly handed the bottle, not to Mrs. Kane, but to Paul Geidel. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth—he tried to speak, but could not.

"So that's where you got the drug to kill Jackson with, is it?" queried Dougherty. "You are under arrest."

Every glance, every movement of the prisoner told of his guilt, yet he did not speak. The detectives did not press him with questions. Dougherty was content to let the setting he had arranged—the silent third degree—work on his mind.

Reilly took back the bottle which Geidel had been examining with the horror he would have shown had a deadly adder been placed, wriggling, in his hands.

They took him to police headquarters. All the way downtown Geidel was living again the scene in the little room, lit by the reddish gleam from the lamp. A score of times he lived again that moment when the detective, with horrible dramatic force, had stepped out of the bathroom, in his hand that bottle which the youth had forgotten to destroy.

Before he was sent to his cell Geidel said to Reilly: "I did it. Can they hang me for this?"

Geidel was convicted.

### "Abe" Rueff's Experience.

An early form of the silent third degree, in that no questions were asked, was practiced on "Abe" Rueff, the San Francisco political boss, who was convicted of graft.

Rueff was in prison awaiting trial. William J. Burns was handling the case and was making every effort to wring a confession from the prisoner.

There was a keeper in the prison named McCarthy, who was on duty near Rueff's cell. Burns discontinued his calls and instructed this man to waken Rueff every night at two o'clock sharp. This McCarthy did by banging on the wall with a heavy stool. Rueff, the first few nights, did not pay much attention to the disturbance, merely turning over and going to sleep again. At last it got on his nerves. He would jump off his cot at the first sound and demand, "what was that?"

McCarthy would make no reply, and Rueff would run to the barred door of his cell and look out, to see the keeper apparently asleep.

Sometimes he would waken the keeper and say, "Didn't you hear anything?"

"Not a sound," McCarthy would answer.

This formula was gone through night after night until on one occasion Rueff leaped from bed, to find McCarthy wide awake.

"Didn't you hear anything at all?" asked the prisoner.

"Nothin' but you talkin' in your sleep," said McCarthy.

"What was I talking about?" said Rueff, alarmed.

"The graft cases," said McCarthy. "My heavens!" cried Rueff. "Am I going crazy? My mind must be getting unsettled. I want to see Burns tomorrow."

# IN THE LIMELIGHT

## ARGENTINA'S NEW PRESIDENT



Hipolito Irigoyen, the recently inaugurated president of Argentina, heads the first radical administration in that country. He was elected president because a majority of the voters trusted him, personally, implicitly and blindly. Those who believe in him consider him Argentina's greatest man. His opponents regard him as extremely dangerous and look forward to his administration with the gravest misgivings.

Doctor Irigoyen is about sixty, a tall, powerfully built, imposing man, and very dark. His blood is Spanish Basque, with a slight Indian strain, some say.

He began life poor. He is self-educated and a highly cultivated man. He is now very rich, the result of land transactions. By occupation he is a ranchman on a huge scale, with a very modest residence in Buenos Aires.

For a long time, for pure recreation, he held the professorship of "civic instruction" at the Buenos Aires Normal School for Women. His salary for this work he turned over regularly to the United Charities of Buenos Aires. Twelve years ago a president who was his personal enemy caused his removal from this post in the normal school and he has never held it since.

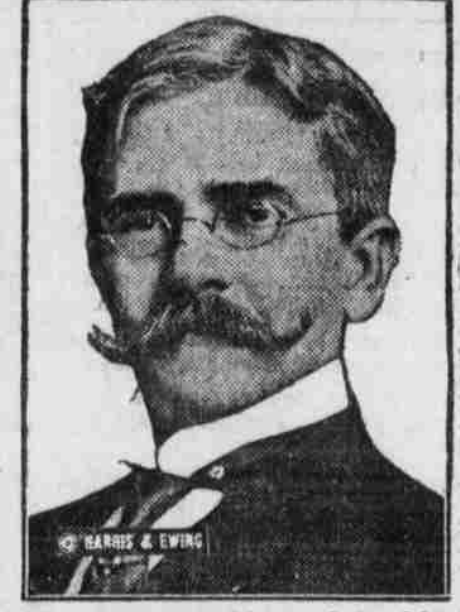
## BELISARIO PORRAS RETURNS

Friends both in the diplomatic corps and in residential circles have welcomed back to Washington Dr. Belisario Porras, until October 1 president of the republic of Panama, and now minister of that country to the United States. Before his presidential term Doctor Porras served his country in the same capacity here.

There are few honors that his country can confer which have not fallen into the basket of Doctor Porras, and both he and his wife, a charming Porto Rican, are pleasantly remembered for their hospitality and charm.

Shortly after Doctor Porras first was appointed minister at Washington Senora de Porras was married to him by proxy, the first marriage by proxy ever solemnized in the diplomatic corps in Washington. The minister was not able to go to Porto Rico for his bride, and the strict etiquette governing the conduct of gentlemen of her country would not admit of her coming here before her marriage.

Therefore, an intimate friend represented the minister at the ceremony, and after that Senora de Porras sailed for New York, where she was met by her "vrai" bridegroom. Not long afterward they went to Panama that the minister might enter the campaign for president.



## ADVICE FROM DOCTOR WILEY



"Food prices could be reduced 50 per cent if manufacturers would sacrifice their velvet."

"The people should get back to fundamentals. There is no sense in paying 40 cents a pound for a cereal preparation when with \$2 wheat there can be no more than four cents' actual value in it."

That is what Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, former chief of the government bureau of chemistry, thinks of the high cost of living, according to a talk he made in Toledo.

"The American people, and especially the American housewives, know little about foods," he continued.

"That is why they spend one dollar and twenty cents a pound for the nourishment they can get from a pound of meat, when they can get enough wheat to last a man a month for the same price."

"Some of the factors that tend to increase prices beyond the actual value of a commodity as food are excessive advertising of brands."

"Americans drink labels and eat brands, and it is good exercise for them—opening their pocketbooks. The value of brands often is overestimated because of extravagantly worded advertising."

## MISS ANNIE R. ROE

It would be hard to find a better example of what woman's work stands for in the federal service than that supplied by the record of Miss Annie R. Roe, chief of the numbering division of the bureau of engraving and printing. Miss Roe entered the bureau in June, 1865, and has given it over half a century of service.

Amid the whirl of flying machinery doing its full part in the daily output of the nation's wealth, Miss Roe sits serenely at her desk in evident obliviousness to the noise of the busy wheels. Here she directs the last stage in the many processes which turn raw pulp into United States currency.

Miss Roe superintends the numbering, sealing and separating of all United States notes, which is the final act in their creation before being taken to the treasury of the United States to become the legal tender of the nation. Miss Roe is modest almost to the point of reticence in regard to her work, and it is with difficulty that she can be persuaded to speak of it.

With the weight of responsibility which for so many years has rested upon her shoulders, Miss Roe yet looks younger than her age, and except that the tenure of her service indicates maturer years one would find it hard to believe that she had passed the half century mark. Mental and physical activity and efficiency are stamped upon her every movement, and there is hardly a doubt but that she knows every minute of the day the exact condition of the work engaged in by every one of the 229 men and women under her supervision.

Nor is it a harsh or unsympathetic surveillance she exerts. A woman of full experience and trained understanding, she knows what comprises an honest day's work for those under her. While she demands that this be given, she also appreciates the situation when conditions warrant leniency. Among all her people she is to herself the only severe taskmaster, and from herself she exacts harder and longer hours than from any of the employees under her charge.

