

Mother Jailed, Son Confesses Doctor's Death

Woman Convicted of Slaying Former Omahan Imposed Seal of Silence on Boy, 15.

By International News Service.
 Los Angeles, March 7.—Harold Sonny Willis, 15-year-old son of Margaret B. Willis, under life sentence for the slaying of Benjamin B. Baldwin, formerly of Omaha, confessed today he killed the physician.

According to the authorities, the youth related his story to his aunt, Mrs. Virginia Nelson.

District Attorney Asa Keyes immediately launched an investigation of the startling story told by the convicted slayer's son.

Breaking the seal of silence he declared was imposed upon him by his mother, who, he said, was willing to immolate herself on the altar of justice to avoid implicating him in the crime, the youth bared what he asserted were the facts of the slaying which gained nation-wide notoriety as the "mystery trunk murder."

Hurled Over Cliff.
 The body of the physician, found murdered here last April, had been stuffed into a trunk and hurled over a canyon cliff.

As a result of the boy's dramatic recital steps were on foot today to bring about a complete reopening of the historic case.

An appeal is to be carried to Governor Friend W. Richardson by Mrs. Willis' sister, Mrs. Virginia Nelson, asking for his intervention, if neces-

sary, to gain the convicted woman a rehearing.

As the first move of the bitter legal campaign, which promised to become one of the most spectacular in the annals of Los Angeles courts, an attempt was begun to have Mrs. Willis kept in her cell in the county jail pending a full investigation of her son's story, instead of being sent to San Quentin to begin serving her life sentence.

Breaks Down Composure.

The confession of the self-asserted youthful slayer succeeded in breaking down the phenomenal composure of his mother, who gained the sobriquet of "the woman of iron and steel" during the weary weeks in which she fought desperately for her life on the witness stand. Scarcely a ripple of emotion played over her cool, intelligent features when she stood up to receive the sentence which shut her off from the rest of the world.

The news, however, of her son's act threw her into a hysterical state.

"Oh, why did he tell, why did he tell?" she moaned over and over between gusts of sobbing that shook her frame.

"He is your son and would not let you make the great sacrifice of going to prison for life," one of the matrons answered Mrs. Willis.

Tells of Struggle.
 Young Willis' confession stated he killed the physician when he found him struggling with his mother on the floor of the Willis home.

The boy confessed:
 "I had just come home from school. It was between half-past 3 and 4 o'clock. As I came in I found mamma on the floor struggling with Dr. Baldwin. She was fighting him off. When I got in she said, 'Sonny, quick, come over and help me.' The doctor hit me and mamma shouted, 'Get the gun in the closet in the little handbag, quick, and give it to me.'

"I ran in the closet and got the

Mother Accepts Sentence to Shield Son in Slaying of Former Omahan



Left: Mrs. Margaret B. Willis and 'Sonny' Willis, her son, who has confessed the slaying for which his mother was sentenced to life imprisonment.



Right: Dr. Benjamin B. Baldwin, Creighton graduate and former Omahan, for whose death Mrs. Willis was tried and convicted.

gun—a .32 Remington that I have shot many times on hunting trips, but instead of giving it to mamma, I shot him myself."

Woman Victim of Auto Crash Dies

Divorced Wife of Omaha Policeman Succumbs to Injuries.

Mrs. Elmer Heller, Council Bluffs, divorced wife of Police Officer Heller, died Saturday noon at St. Joseph hospital from injuries received Friday morning in an automobile accident.

Her skull was fractured when the automobile in which she was driving, overturned Friday at 3 a. m., at Thirty-sixth and Jefferson streets.

George Carmichael, 3223 Avenue A, Council Bluffs, driver of the car, was said to have lost control of the car.

Other occupants of the automobile gave their names as Mrs. R. A. Albright, Twenty-eighth and Avenue A, Council Bluffs, and John Smith, Twenty-seventh and Avenue A, Council Bluffs.

Bridegroom, 61, Gets Divorce From Wife, 28

Omaha Traveling Salesman, 75, Weds Nebraska Woman; Iowa Farmer, 62, Weds Omaha Woman.

December's mating with May ended Friday when District Judge J. S. Dewell in Council Bluffs granted George Pfeiffer, 61, a divorce from Cleopatra Iselin Pfeiffer, 28, now living with her parents at 5003 North Twenty-second street, Omaha.

Pfeiffer is chief inspector of the Council Bluffs water works, where he has been employed since 1881. He married the young woman September 29, 1924. He claims she left him the day after their wedding and he has not seen her since.

Two Meals Together.
 According to the court reporter's notes, Pfeiffer testified that he ate only two meals with his bride. One of these was the wedding supper Saturday night and the other Sunday dinner.

They stayed that night at the home of her mother in Omaha.

Sunday afternoon he said he went out to get some cigars and when he returned both his wife and her mother were gone and he didn't see Mrs. Pfeiffer again.

His attorney, George E. Wright, said mental cruelty was the charge.

Their Second Wedding.
 Two couples, each of the quartet taking their second leap into matrimony, were married Friday in Council Bluffs by Rev. Henry DeLong.

C. M. Schneider, 75, Omaha, a traveling salesman, whose wife died eight months ago, was wedded to Anna Malchow, 44, West Point, Neb. Chris Rippel, 62, farmer, Wall Lake, Ia., married Della Stephens of Omaha.

N. Y. Too Fast for Danbaum and Dennison

Chief Sleuth Comes Home Without Sunshine But Brings New Derby; Meets Al Smith.

Isaac Sunshine is still safe in New York. Chief of Detectives Ben Danbaum returned to Omaha Saturday morning from a futile second trip after the aged man, wanted here to answer charges of a \$4,500 swindle.

Tom Dennison, going on other business, accompanied him. They stopped at Albany on the way to New York, intending to fix things up neatly so they could take Isaac right with them.

They met Governor Al Smith himself and explained their business.

"Oh, yes," says Al.

"Oh, yes," said the governor, and asked his secretary whether anybody was representing Sunshine.

"Yes," said the secretary: "Dan is. He just stepped out."

Soon "Dan" returned, a prosperous-looking man, and asked the governor: "Are you representing Isaac Sunshine, Dan?"

"Yes, Al," said Dan. "He hasn't been out of New York for years. He's sick in bed now and nothing can be done about a hearing."

Back to Nebraska.
 "Well, boys," said the governor, turning to Danbaum and Dennison, "you better go back to Nebraska. When we can have a hearing, we'll let you know."

Danbaum and Dennison decided they didn't have much standing there in comparison with Dan, who called the governor "Al." They departed from the office.

Dan was on the same train on which they proceeded to New York. He told them Sunshine hasn't been out of New York for 20 years.

"He lives just a block from the county attorney, who will swear that he has never been in Nebraska," said Dan. Dan showed the most intimate knowledge of New York politics and politicians.

Experienced Earthquake.
 Danbaum and Dennison were on Broadway last Saturday night when the earthquake occurred.

"People ran in every direction," said Dennison. "Some of them yelled to run into the churches. But I couldn't see any churches handy."

Danbaum started his comrades in central police station with the derby he bought in New York. Everybody's swearing them on Broadway, he said, and he doesn't want to be a bit behind the procession in style.

Just wait till Governor Al Smith wants to extradite some person from Omaha, that's all. "Them's the sentiments" of the two returned tourists.

Wife Shoots Self Before Mirror; Leaves Note Urging Mate to Wed; Asks Jewels Be Buried With Her

After writing a note, asking her husband to marry another wife, Mrs. Frances Noble, wife of Louis S. Noble, a paving man, stood in front of a mirror in the bedroom of her home, 1944 South Twelfth street, at noon Saturday and sent a revolver bullet through the roof of her mouth.

Instead of reaching the brain it came out near the left eye and surgeons in St. Joseph hospital say she will live.

A second shot which she fired went wild altogether and she ran then to the rear of the house and threw the revolver into an icebox and screamed for help.

Mrs. Sarah Zarboro, living downstairs and Mrs. Louise Roma, a neighbor, came to her assistance and called police and a doctor. Before these arrived, Noble dove up with Alfio Cortese, 1929 South Fourteenth street. They took the injured woman to the hospital.

In one hand she clutched a photograph of her son, Sebastiano, 14, and in the other the note, written in Italian. It was translated:

"Dear Husband: Someone has been telling lies about me and they have broken you and me. But I am innocent. I want my jewels buried with me and I want you to marry another wife because our son needs a mother."

Lane's Friends Administrators

Court Respects Desire of Late Rail Official in Unsigned Will.

D. B. Welpton and Frank H. Myers of Omaha were made administrators of the estate of Charles J. Lane, late Union Pacific railroad official, by Judge Bryce Crawford in county court Saturday morning.

Judge Crawford based his decision on Mr. Lane's unsigned will, which indicated a desire to have his two Omaha friends administer his estate.

"Although the will, being unsigned, has no standing in court, I cannot but consider it Mr. Lane's desire to have Mr. Myers and Mr. Welpton as administrators," said Judge Crawford.

Harry B. Tutbill of Grand Rapids, had filed a petition asking that Victor Tutbill, another cousin, be made administrator. A search for a signed will still is in progress.

Mrs. Lea Kirwin, Mr. Lane's housekeeper, appeared in county court Saturday morning and indicated that she will take steps to retain certain gifts which she says Mr. Lane presented to her, according to Judge Crawford.

LEGION SEEKS MAN TO SUCCEED 'BUCK'

No successor had been selected at the meeting of members of the convention committee of the American Legion Saturday to take the chairmanship of the committee, formerly held by the late Everett Buckingham.

There have already been two meetings. Another meeting is to be held Saturday afternoon.

ORGANIZATION OF SENATE DELAYED

Washington, March 7.—Objection from their own ranks prevented the republican majority today from completing organization of the new senate.

When the republican organization brought in its slate of committee assignments, relegating the La Follette insurgents to places of minor rank, Senators Norris, republican, of Nebraska and Borah, republican, of Idaho blocked immediate consideration.

In the new committee assignments Senator Capper, republican, of Kansas has been selected for the place on the foreign relations committee, which had been held by the late Senator McCormick of Illinois.

SEARS SAILS FOR PANAMA

Washington, D. C., March 7.—Congressman Willis G. Sears, sailed from New York Thursday morning on the steamship "Christal" for a three weeks' visit in Central America. This ship carried a number of congressmen and senators and members of their families who will be the guests of the government while in Panama.

On the way down, the ship will touch at Port au Prince and then proceed to Panama. There will be a trip through the canal and numerous side trips into the country by automobile for those who care for them. Congressman Sears will return to Washington the last of the month and will then return to Omaha.

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K. OF C. BUILDING BIDS ARE SOUGHT

The building committee of the Knights of Columbus announces that it will soon have plans and specifications ready for contractors who wish to submit bids on the new clubhouse which will be erected on the south side of Dodge street, between Twentieth and Twenty-first streets. It is expected that the bids will be opened about April 15.

The new clubhouse will cost approximately \$500,000 and serve as a civic center for various organizations. The main floor auditorium will be designed for use as a ballroom banquet hall, or for dramatic and musical entertainments.

An important feature of the design is the application of the unit system, whereby any feature may be used without intruding upon the privacy or privacy of another feature or department. The natatorium will be 35 by 90 feet.

EGGE LEAVES FOR CAPITAL

Carl F. Egge, superintendent of air mail, left Saturday evening for Washington and New York City where he will spend a week. He will go to Hazelhurst field, New Jersey, to inspect three new planes to be put on "try-out" for the air mail service.

Egge will be met at the inspection field by J. E. Whitbeck, superintendent of the eastern division; E. C. Richard, superintendent of the repair department of the air service at Chicago; and Professor E. F. Warner, instructor in aeronautics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

MOTOR POLICE GIVEN PRAISE

Will M. Brady, general instructor in the Indianapolis (Ind.) police department and former battalion chief, is in Omaha in the interests of the Policemen's and Firemen's Insurance association. At Central station he lauded the motorcycle officers.

"All over the United States," he said, "statistics show that about 65 per cent of these 'shock troops' sustain some kind of injury in the course of each year."

MISSOURI RIVER ICE JAM BREAKS

Nobles, Neb., March 7.—Seventeen families who escaped from their homes, when flood waters from the Missouri river rolled upon them, today are expecting to return to their houses within a few hours. An ice gorge, said to be 20 miles long, is moving downstream today and a recession of the flood waters which caused damage to livestock and farmland is expected.

An urgent appeal by residents of this vicinity for army bombing planes to dislodge the ice jam was made.

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Movie Actor Killed.
 Hollywood, Cal., March 7.—Jack (Shorty) Hamilton, 37, motion picture actor, was killed here early today when the automobile he was driving crashed into a steam shovel standing in the street. He was a native of Chicago.

Huntley Couple Celebrates 50th Wedding Anniversary
 Huntley, March 6.—Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sell celebrated their golden wedding anniversary at their home in Huntley. Mr. Sell is 71 and his wife 60. They settled in Nebraska in 1888 and have nine children.

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TEACHER HURT IN GAS BLAST

Miss Evelyn Walton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Willard Walton, 2409 Avenue A, Council Bluffs, was severely cut last Wednesday when a gas oven in the Madison (Ill.) High school exploded in the domestic science room.

Miss Walton was struck in the cheek by a flying piece of timber. The accident occurred at noon when there were no students in the science room. Miss Walton is instructor in domestic science at the Illinois school.

SNOW SUNDAY, ROBINS' FORECAST

Snow is predicted for Sunday by Meteorologist M. V. Robins.

The forecast is mostly cloudy tonight and Sunday, probably snow, colder tonight. Snow was reported in Wyoming, Utah and Idaho.

Cataract Hotel Sold.

The largest real estate transaction in the state of South Dakota was completed Saturday when the H. A. Wolf company, Omaha realtors, purchased the Cataract hotel from W. E. Ward, examiner in charge of the Sioux Falls Trust and Savings bank. The consideration was \$320,000 cash.

It is reported that the property was purchased for the Eppley Hotel company, operators of a number of leading hotels in the middle west among which is the Carpenter hotel at Sioux Falls.

FIREMAN THROWN FROM HOSE TRUCK

William Ryan, fireman at station No. 2, was severely cut and bruised about the head Friday afternoon when he was thrown from the truck on which he was riding at Tenth and Douglas streets.

Ryan's company was answering a call at Tenth and Douglas streets, where a tractor was on fire, and when the truck stopped suddenly, Ryan was thrown to the pavement, striking on his head.

He was treated by police surgeons and removed to his home.

The tractor was only slightly damaged by fire.

SUSPECTS IN AUTO THEFTS RETURNED

Robert Swanson and Larry Dowd were taken back to Moline, Ill., at 3 Saturday morning by Detective Sergeant S. M. Peterson.

They were captured two miles north of Council Bluffs last Thursday after they had run their Ford sedan into a ditch and fled. Bluffs police, at the time, were searching for two men who had escaped from Federal Prohibition Agent Sumner Knox in Missouri Valley.

According to the Moline officer, the two perpetrated a robbery in central Illinois and then stole a car in Moline in which they escaped.

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