

STARKWEATHER

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still alive.

But when a relative entered the house the next morning, Mrs. Ward was dead in the bedroom, not of the injury to her back, but of multiple stab wounds to her chest and neck. Fencil was tied to another bed, with fatal stab wounds to her chest and stomach.

Although some authorities believed Fugate played a large role in those slayings, she never was brought to trial for them, and it remains another mystery from the murder spree.

Taking the Wards' 1956 Packard, Starkweather and Fugate fled west again, stopping for gas at Grand Island and Broken Bow.

By Jan. 29, Starkweather and Fugate crossed the state line into Wyoming. While driving on Highway 87 through Douglas, Wyo., he decided to switch cars again. Twelve miles west of Douglas, he spotted a parked car owned by 37-year-old Merle Collison, a traveling salesman from Montana. Starkweather approached the locked car and shot Collison nine times with his .22. Fugate climbed into the back seat when a geologist, Joe Sprinkle, drove by. He stopped and wrestled the gun from Starkweather. As they were fighting, a Wyoming deputy sheriff saw them and also stopped. Fugate suddenly jumped from Collison's car and screamed that it was Starkweather.

Meanwhile, Starkweather escaped in the Packard and headed back through Douglas. He ran through a police roadblock and drove east at speeds approaching 120 mph. A pursuing sheriff shot out the Packard's back window, and the flying glass cut Starkweather's ear.

Starkweather stopped abruptly in the middle of the highway, got out and stood before the sheriff's car. It was his last act as a free man.

After several days in custody in Wyoming, Starkweather and Fugate were brought back to Nebraska and came under the close attention of both the local and world media.

Starkweather was arraigned March 26, 1958, and pleaded innocent to a first-degree murder charge in the death of Robert Jensen Jr. His court-appointed lawyers, T. Clement Gaughan and William Matschullat, entered a plea of insanity, but Starkweather objected and did not cooperate.

An 18-day trial, hinging on whether or not Starkweather actually knew what he was doing at the time of the killings, followed. On May 23, 1958, an eight-woman, four-man jury deliberated nearly 24 hours before returning the verdict. Starkweather was found guilty and sentenced to die in the Nebraska electric chair.

Because of a number of judicial reviews and appeals, the execution date was postponed four times, ultimately being appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. But the appeal was refused, and the execution date was set—June 25, 1959. Soon after midnight, Starkweather was taken from his cell in the Nebraska State Penitentiary to the electrocution chamber. After being strapped in, he was offered the customary chance for last words. He shook his head.

He was pronounced dead at 12:04 a.m.

Fugate's trial began Oct. 27, 1958. She also pleaded innocent to an identical murder charge for aiding Starkweather in the death of Robert Jensen Jr. After a highly emotional trial, the jury rejected her contention that she was an unwilling companion on the eight-day spree. She was convicted for first-degree murder at age 14, the youngest female in U.S. history to be so convicted. She was sentenced to life in prison at the Nebraska Center for Women in York. Paroled on June 20, 1976, she moved to Michigan with a new identity.

It is difficult for most people to comprehend why a 19-year-old youth, with no previous criminal record, would be involved in murders of 11 people. But Starkweather was far from an ordinary person. The next part in this series will focus on Starkweather's background and personality.

Police Report

The UNL Police Department received the following calls and complaints from 7 a.m. Monday to 7 a.m. Tuesday:

8:27 a.m. — Security alarm malfunction reported; location withheld for security reasons.

11:05 a.m. — Electric motor reported stolen from 715 N. 16th St.

11:39 a.m. — Traffic accident reported in Parking Area 2 near 10th and Avery streets; no injuries reported.

2:30 p.m. — Auto accessories reported stolen from car in front of the Nebraska State Historical Society Museum.

3:10 p.m. — Book reported stolen from

Love Library.

3:36 p.m. — Stereo booster/equalizer and speaker reported stolen from car in Parking Area 3 on 14th and New Hampshire streets.

7:32 p.m. — Belated report of weightlifting equipment stolen from Schramm Hall.

10:37 p.m. — Floor buffer reported lost or stolen from East Campus.

10:29 p.m. — Report of beer bottle being thrown at person at Cather Hall.

3:01 a.m. — Person at Selleck Quadrangle taken to hospital, treated for illness and released.

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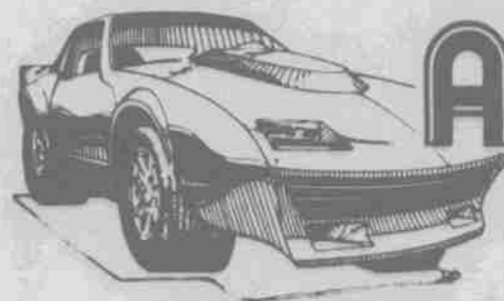
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