

never did he want anything--you know, ~~js~~ usually they want money to get out of jail--and then they tell you--you know, they want something. That guy didn't ask for a thing. There are others-- we got a big murder that the papers will be playing for days-- headlines with all the developments--and crime stories used to be the big stories of course, then. And people 'd walk in the office and say, "Well, your work is over, I did it, I want to tell you about ~~ix~~ it." A man would come in, he'd look sensible, and you'd have to take them someplace, a hotel room, you know, run down everything he told you, because you couldn't afford just to slough it off, and you'd find eventually after you'd worked very hard on the things ~~w~~ he was ~~xxx~~ telling ~~xxxx~~ you, he didn't know a damn thing more about it than you did or that had been in the newspaper. This was ~~the~~ common. The bigger the headlines, the more apt we were to get a convinving--it was rarely a woman. It was almost always a man. Now I suppose a psychologist or psychiatrist could have many theories regarding this type behavior. And I suppose also that it varies with the

different people who do it--you know, their motive. But if they want attention, they sure as hell get it, because we always took them seriously, unless they were just obviously off, but they one that I remember were convincing, seemed intelligent, and were just doing the thing that they would explain to you that they were doing this because they thought it was the duty of a good citizen to do it. And the man in Chicago--I didn't want him locked up, particularly, but I just had to get his fingerprints, to have him checked, to see who he was and what this was all about/ So he did one night accept my invitation for a bottle of beer, ~~when~~ we were on North Clark Street, I think. We went in kind of a beat-up bar and ordered a bottle of beer; or I ordered a bottle of beer for him, I guess. And he drank it. I thought, "well, I'll--" My plan was to get the bottle, get the bottle to the police and ~~have them~~ get the prints off of it and see what they could do with them. Resorting to getting him arrested. See what they could do with the prints. Because the chances are, ~~xxx~~ you can

your gonna ^{leave} ~~xxxxxx~~ lose enough
drink a bottle of beer out of the bottle and
prints to be identified. But he kept moving his hands when he'd
pick up the bottle so that any print that he would leave would be
completed smudged--obliterated. He'd never touch the bottle where
he would leave a print. And this, I think was not accidental--
I think this was by design. I think he was determined not to
leave fingerprints anyplace. There was always a completely
uniformed policeman assigned to the Detroit Times to keep the
alley clear for the circulation trucks and to keep order around
the building and the one I remember who was there the longest--
as ~~xxxxxx~~ a matter of fact, he was there when I first got there--
was a man we'll call Mike. And he didn't really have much of a
distinguished record in the police department, and this was sort
of a safe place, I guess, they thought, to put him. Well, theoretically,
they outlined what his duties were there, with traffic, and keep
order, but he was very hard to find, because he'd usually be on
a blind pig in the neighborhood. He had--during the week he drank

on the house--in other words, he wouldn't pay for his drinks--
 and on Sunday, however, he'd get all dressed up in civilian
 clothes--he'd be in uniform all week--in civilian clothes and
 come down to the same blind pig and spend money all day long,
 buying drinks for other people and drinking himself. I don't
 understand this way of line, but that was his way. Now he
 only --in all the time I knew him, many years--he tried to
 make one arrest--he wasn't very successful. He was chasing
 someone he thought was a thief down Times Square, and he
 started to shoot at this guy, fired a couple of shots, he didn't
 hit him, but he did hit a girl on the third floor of the Book
 Building across the street who ~~was~~ was a stenographer sitting in
 her office typing. And one of the bullets aimed at the man
 running in the street hit her in the arm. Yeah--I mean this
 is about the kind of cop he was. One day I had an attorney
 call me--there had been a murder in Detroit--and this attorney
 was a friend of mine--he ~~had~~ said, "Ray, I've got _____"--

he was the man accused of the murder--and he said, "I'm going to turn him in, I thought maybe you'd like the story.✕--Do you want to take him in?¶ And then I'll show up later." And I said, "Well, sure--at least I'll know that nobody else has it that way, and I'll get the story." So I had met the two of them--the ~~axx~~ man accused of the murder got in my car. His picture had been on the front page of the paper several days and I wanted to tell my office that development--that I was on my way, because it was getting kind of late in the day--and I had written the whole story in the past tense--and it was being held and typed--so we could come right out as soon as we got to police headquarters. So I went in the office to tell ^{them} ~~him~~ that, also to take another reporter with me who could get on the phone as soon as we got to headquarters, and when I drove up--_____ had been quick on the ~~xxx~~ telephone, because there wasn't a phone there--when we got up to the side of the Times there wasn't a place to park, but Jake happened to be out--Mike--pardon me--Mike happened to be out there. And I

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said, "Look, Mike, come here, I'm going to triple park. Here watch this car and don't let anybody tow it away, or come near it, police or anybody else." So Mike for the 15 minutes or so I was out there stood guard over the most wanted man in Detroit and never, never, knew until the day of his death that he was standing over the most wanted man in Detroit, he thought this was some freind of mine. And afterwards, I didn't have the heart to tell him--well, if I had, I don't think we wouldv'e understood it anyway.

MK: This is September 4, 1961. Ray, there is a further story that has some connection with the Detroiter--also known as the LaSalle Hotel.

RG: Yes, I know, it got a big play in the newspapers at the time, and I covered it and recall quite a big about it. A man named _____ Carter Dickinson, who was New York attorney from a top law firm was in Detroit to settle an estate. The ^{Yawkey} Yalke estate, it was a very big one. And he was having dinner at this then--Book Cadillac Hotel where he was staying, and at the next table were

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three girls and a man. They got acquainted in the dining room. Now, the girls had--questionable backgrounds, to put it mildly, and so the man --they joined parties and took Mr. Dickinson for a ride around Detroit, to show him the scenery. When they got to Rouge Park, Schweizer, who was the man with the three girls pulled out a gun to hold him up. Now it developed in the trial that the girls were not surprised by this holdup, they rather expected that; but what they didn't expect --none of them--was that Schweizer then killed the man in cold blood and left his body ~~xxxx~~ in Rouge Park. It was found, and the detectives went to work on it right away, and they didn't have to work too ~~terribly~~ ~~hard~~ hard, because these people were pretty bad--you know, pretty incompetent thieves and murderers-- they left clues all over the city. They --many people had seen Dickinson and them eating together--saw them together in town, and the three girls and Schweizer lived at the Detrouiter Hotel. Right after the murder, they all four of them hurried back to the Detrouiter Hotel and in the middle of the night--checked out. And told the room clerk they had to leave town. So the mother--by this time they were identified--the police had no --not too much trouble identifying all

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four of them; their having been with Dickinson, and therefore being the prime suspects. They ~~entered~~ the mother of two of the girls, they were sisters--lived in Detroit--and the police intercepted a telegram from the sisters sent from Ft. Wayne Indiana to the mother, assuring her that they were all right and they'd be in touch with her again very soon. The Detroit police then had the Ft. Wayne police arrest them because the girls even gave their Ft. Wayne address in the telegram. And arrested all of them. They were brought back to Detroit, and their trial was in Recorder's Court and it was one of those wild ones because the girls were screaming throughout the trial that --they were scared to death, they were overcome by their emotions, they didn't think that they should be tried for murder, because they didn't understand that the death caused in the connection of a felony is murder in Michigan; they were found guilty quickly. The only question in anybody's mind was of course--I think the jury felt a little sorry for the girls because while it wasn't past them, according to testimony, to

agree to the robbery, certainly murder was something they
 didn't consider and would not condone. But they were all
 sentenced to life in prison, and Schweitzer was sentenced
 first and he yelled and fainted when the sentence was
 passed; these two sisters were then called forward to the
 bench, sentenced to life in prison; they both screamed and
 fainted, and the next girl was called up, sentenced to life
 and she screamed and uttered what I ~~think~~ think was one of the
 most classic lines ever heard in a courtroom. The judge pro-
 nounced the life sentence, and she said, "I'll never live to
 serve it." I haven't figured that one out yet. But --

MK; Further point of information, Ray--wasn't the victim, Mr.

Dickinson, the nephew of the--

RG: --Of the United States Supreme Court justice, yes.

The girl who said she'd never live to serve her life sentence
 didn't have to serve it--live until she died--because she, as
 well as the other girls, were given new trials after they were
 in the House of Correction for about five years. and they were free.

And the man served an awful lot of time. He might still be in prison, I haven't checked. But I ^{saw him} found the last time I was up at Jackson Prison, so he served a lot of time.

MK: It appears that he might live to serve it--

RG: He might live to serve it, yeah! He might live to serve it.

MK: Ray, let's talk about the Tony Sabbatoris case.

RG: Well, Tony Sabbatoris was a bank robber who with a partner stuck up a bank in Midland, Michigan, the summer of 1936. Question mark. To be verified. And while hhe holdup was in progress, a dentist wñth offices on the second floor of a building immediately across the street from the bank knew something --knew something was going on--took his deer rifle and stationed himself in the window and when the bank bandits came out shooting, he shot and killed Sabbatoris' partner. Sabbatoris was confused--as to where the bullets were coming from--and saw the sun reflect on the visor of a bankguard-- the cap visor of a bank guard--shot and killed the bankguard--

Sabbatoris thought he was the one who killed his partner--
and then Sabbatoris got in the car and drove it himself, but
was cuaght before he got out of town by some local police, so
the whole job was bubgled. He, incidentally, was slightly
wounded--Sabbatoris. It was a federal case--the bank wad
federal insurance. It was a federal case, of course, the
bank being under Federal jurisdiction--so he was--Sabbatoris
was tried for murder in Bay City, Michigan, where a Federal
judge from Detroit often held court. In this case it was
Arthur J. Tuttle--the late Arthur J. Tuttle--and Sabbatoris
had no defense to speak of. He waz quickly found guilty of
murder on Federal property by tje jury and this makes the
death penalty possible because of the Federaljurisdiction,
even though the State of Michigan ~~xx~~ does not have capital
punishment and no one had been executed since 19--or before,
rather, 124 years. Sabbatoris was kept during the trial and
the night after the verdict came in in a jail in Saginaw, which
is a town near Bay City...like 12 miles away, because it's a newer
jail and is considered much more secure. So I --I don't know, but

You can't be two or three places at once; you might have two or three people and you have an agreement that if anything happens, you'll let the others know. So I said to Stark, "Look, I'll go to Saginaw" (George Stark of the News).

"And make a connection with the jail and if he tries to commit suicide tonight, I'll call you. You in the meantime keep in touch with the judge and all the attorneys, both Federal and Defense attorneys who were staying at his hotel in Saginaw, in case anything happens--

MK: ...Bay City.

RG: I beg pardon, Bay City. And Lawrence McCracken was covering for the Free Press. He had gotten his work done early, so when a verdict came in, he just had to phone in a lead, because it was late at night, and for the first time during the whole trial, which lasted about three weeks, he was drinking that night, and drinking pretty good. So, you know, he was through work, ~~through his work~~ no reason why he shouldn't--except his liver--and I went to bed quite late--and just got in bed when

two things happened; I heard a siren and my telephone rang, almost at the same time. ~~Then~~ I answered the phone--it was the jail, telling me that Sabbatoris had cut his throat and wrists with a razor blade he found in his cell. It seems there's always a razor blade in the cell, in every jail in the world. And that they were taking him to the hospital and the siren I heard was the ambulance. So I called Stark and told him and told him I was going to the hospital right away and told him also to tell McCracken. Now it was too late for McCracken to do anything with the story because the Free Press was all through printing for that night; but I wanted him to know it anyway, so he wouldn't be embarrassed by his office having to tell him the next day. I went to the hospital, saw that Sabbatoris was in pretty bad shape, but there was a chance for him to live. And they took him to surgery right away. George Stark came down and I said, --I told him what the situation was and said, "Where's McCracken?" And he said, "That son

of a bitch, he's been banging on my door all evening, I was going to write my story--and then I called him and told him what happened--Sabbatoris tried to commit suicide, and he said, "Get outta here, I started that rumor;" and went back to sleep, so I can't get him up. He wouldn't believe it. He had been running around drunk, telling everybody earlier that Sabbatoris had killed himself, and that was before the verdict, but Sabbatoris then was ~~than~~ taken very good care of, and lived. It seems that the government ~~is~~ was determined to get the best possible medical attention so Judge Tuttle wouldn't be disappointed. And he wasn't; they took him-- Sabbatoris--out to Milan, a Federal prison, near Detroit, some miles from Detroit--Ann Arbor, really--and kept him there and built--to cheer him up daily--built the scaffold a few feet from his cell window--so he could watch the progress. The date was--the sentence had been passed; he was to be hanged on a certain date at daylight, and hell nor high water couldn't get in the way of it. And didn't. You want this story? Knock

this off and then go on the hanging later?

MK: All right.

RG: Because that--Judge Tuttle, of course, didn't seem to be satiated with this one hanging which did take place. Later he sentenced another man who during WWII--who was found guilty of harboring an escaped Nazi flier. Escpaed from a prison camp in Canada. Sentencing him to be hanged; and I wasn't here at the time that--I covered the sentencing, and ^{President} ~~Governor~~ Roosevelt later commuted that sentence. And the first hanging seemed to whet Tuttle's appetite, and they tell me that he sort of went all to opieces when Roosevelt took his decisive act in saving the guy's life, and he didn't live too long after that--

Course, I suppose he took the philosophy, his philosophy was, what the hell do expect from a Democrat like Roosevelt, anyway.

He's--you know, a Communist and a Nazi, and all--he was that kind of a man, he was a fine, fair-minded man I always remember with great admiration.

MK: We might mention that that case involved ^{Max} ~~Mack~~ Steffan.

RG: Yeah, ^{Max} ~~Mack~~ Steffan was a man he sentenced to be hanged

because he helped this Nazi flier. Steffan was a boob-
he had a little restaurant on East Jefferson Avenue, and
before and at the beginning of WWII he had Bund meetings
in his--in the back room of his restaurant, and of course
everybody in Detroit knew about it, and looked at him more
as a clown than anything else; he really didn't accomplish
anything --didn't help the flier to any degree. He took him--
when the guy got to Detroit he looked him up--because he was
the most prominent Nazi in town, I guess --and he took the
flier for a meal and then to a whorehouse, and then after
a couple of drinks, and then the FBI grabbed him. So--but
it was a hanging offence. Judge Tuttle wasn't going to over-
look it.

MK: We got enough to finish it.

RG: Judge Tuttle's infallibility was somewhat limited, except in his
own appraisal of himself. One day he was--sentenced--a man for

representing himself as a Federal office--he'd been found guilty by a jury--and , well some people thought --couldn't differentiate between a jury finding him guilty and Tuttle finding him guilty-- because Tuttle usually took over the case; anyway, a well-known defense lawyer who had defended this man ~~xxxx~~ appeared with him and the lawyer, the late P.J. M. Alley, was very well-dressed, in a white suit in the summertime, and obviously tailor-made, and obviously expensive clothes. And Judge Tuttle took great umbrage at it, because he thought he mistook Alley for the defendant. And he got him up to the rail, and bawled him out for daring to come to court with those expensive clothes, that he'd purchased with money obviously stolen, and he ripped Alley up and down the back, thinking he was the defendant. Halley didn't say anything until Judge Tuttle passed sentence. And the sentence was the limit. I don't remember now how many years one can get for that, but whatever it was, he got it; there was ~~gas~~ great regret on the part of Tuttle because ~~he~~ ^{it} couldn't be more. But then, Halley said,

"A mistake has been made. I'm the attorney for the defendant, who is this man standing here." And Tuttle did get a little fuffed; he adjourned the sentencing for a week or so; and when they came back for the sentence, he sentenced the proper person. But it was about half of what the original sentence had been. Obviously, he wanted to get rid of that one fast and didn't want appeal and various things to happen to bring this up again.

end of tape

This is Reel 7, September 19, 1971.

MK: Ray, do you have a further episode on the life of Harry Fleisher?

Well, yes.

RG: Episodes, really. There are many connected with ~~him~~^{his}, uh, life; he ^{very much} was very adept at ducking the police when the police wanted him. I remember that during the Lindbergh baby kidnapping ~~some~~^{some} of the geniuses in the east who were working on the case --and actually, a lot of the police who were involved in that were very incompetent-- I saw them in action; but they had heard something about the Detroit Purple Gang ^{so they} that made Harry Fleisher a suspect in the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby because those of us who knew him, and his associates knew that they just weren't capable of doing anything like that; it never entered their minds, they wouldn't kidnap anyone, let alone a child--a baby. However, he made himself very scarce at that time--he wasn't around; just to save himself the trouble of being arrested, I suppose, and questioned. But another time he was being sought because the Supreme Court had upheld his conviction in the holdup of this Aristocrat Club-- a gambling place in Pontiac--and we talked about for which he was sentenced for a long time in prison. And whether he got advance word on what the Supreme Court was going to do or not, I don't know. But when the police want to pick him up, he was gone. And he stayed gone for a long time,

while they ~~were~~^{were} looking for him. It developed that he was arrested

during that time by the Cincinnati police. He was living in

Cincinnati--and taken to the police station. He was arrested

on a traffic violation, but taken to the police station, and

before they could do ~~much~~^{more} about his fingerprints, he talked to

them real earnestly, and convinced them that he was a long-time

resident of Cincinnati, that his wife was going to have a baby

any minute, and he had to be released to get home to her so he

could take her to the hospital because she was in very delicate

condition. So the police released him and he didn't know what they

~~had~~ had, because fliers had gone all over the country about him

because he was a fugitive, the FBI was looking for him; everybody was;

so they ~~put~~^{could} him in Jackson Prison. The Cincinnati police released him; ^{and}

I don't think that they drove him home, but they practically did

everything else because they felt so sorry for a man who~~x~~ was so

upset because his wife was going to have a baby--I don't think Harry

was married even at that time--he was living alone in Cincinnati, at

least. I had to go to--I wrote quite a bit about that in the Times--

and kidding~~xxx~~, the Cincinnati police in a way that made them look

kind of bad--well, they did look bad in the thing, they didn't check

the guy out. So right after that while the story--the ink was almost dry on the paper--I had to go to Cincinnati on a murder story and deal with the police; and I walked in--I wasn't the most welcome person in that police station because they'd been reading the stories I'd been writing about them. However-- it didn't take long to get along with them--they're a good bunch of fellows down there, and we all laughed about it, really. Fleisher was picked up later and served his time. He --I think that's the only-- his arrest in Cincinnati was in '49 and he was with in Cincinnati-- he was living alone--it later developed that he was with Johnnie Gotch(?) who was ~~the~~ known as J.J. Johnny, and was one of the best with a reputation, at least, ^{of} ~~being~~ being one of the most competent and burglars that Detroit ever produced--that says a lot. Gotch made a specialty of finding out--in those years there was ^{still} a lot of hot money around; people were cheating on their income tax and would keep ~~cash~~ ^{cash} either in their saloons or night clubs or blind pigs or gambling establishments-- their homes--^{or} ~~and~~ they might be legitimate people--you know, so-called legitimate, except for the income tax--professional people; doctors, lawyers, whatever. And he made it a practice to find out about those people and burglarize and their places, and of course, they were very

reluctant to report it. But a lot of us knew some of the scores he made in those burglaries. And they were 50, 60 thousand dollars. And Johnny would spend it about as fast as he would get it; so he had to keep working; he met a sudden and tragic ending. He was burglarizing one place on a Sunday afternoon and something he didn't know--the man who had the hidden money in his house--this was the house he was burglarizing--heard him trying to get ⁱⁿ through the front door and shot him to death with a shotgun. This was in the very early '50's and this ended a quite ^{an} interesting career of Johnny Gotch. There was a colony of these fellows who were convicted and they stayed by themselves pretty well in Jackson; I used to see them when I'd go up there--Mike Sellik--they were all convicted in the Pontiac Aristocrat Club thing--if it ever was robbed--I was sad, maybe I've said it before, but it was said that to me it was ^{all} ridiculous, because Harry Fleisher, with his reputation, could have held that place up by telephone--in other words, he could've called them up--the Aristocrat Club, and told them to bring their money down to Detroit, and they would have because he was pretty generally feared. He was a pretty tough guy. He --but up at prison, there was Fleisher and Max

Sellik, who was convicted on that charge, and he also took it on the lam--he wasn't found for quite awhile, and then he was found on a burglary in New York, in one of the big hotels; he was arrested and sent back to Detroit. Pete Mahoney was a Detroit gambler; and a gambler only--he certainly was not a hold-up man. I--many of us were very skeptical of the evidence of conviction of these people--but they nevertheless served the time. They probably rationalized that they owed ^{the state} that much time for other ^{crimes} ~~crimes~~ anyway. So when I seen them at Jackson they didn't seem to be doing very hard time; they seemed to be getting along well and were kind of the inmate bosses up there. Did I put down about--?

Strange Voice: Mike--didn't he work in the greenhouses there ^{at} in Jackson
MK?

when he went to visit?

RG: You're thinking of Pete Mahoney.

MK? SV: Where was Fleisher? Didn't I see him in the kitchen there?

RG: Yes. Fleisher's previous prison term was in a Federal penitentiary where he served most of five years for counterfeiting. That was just about --in the mid-'30's. Let's see--how the hell could that have been the ^{mid-} thirties?

MK: We were talking, Ray, about the ^{Jo Ann} ~~Joanne~~ Gillespie murder--the

spelling is Jo Ann Gillespie.

RG: Uh, yes--this was an 18-year-old girl who lived on Fisher Avenue on the East Side of Detroit--and on the night of January 2, 1953, she and a girl friend had gone to the DeLuxe Motion Picture Theater on Kercheval near Hamilton--no, pardon me, pardon me. She--the girl, after the movie, the girls had went their separate ways, and arranged to telephone each other when they arrived home to report that they'd gotten home safely. JoAnn never got home. Someplace on Fisher Avenue

← a man jumped from the bushes, dragged her between the houses and choked her and beat her over the head and apparently attempted to rape her but didn't get very far beyond disarranging some of her clothes when a couple people in the neighborhood heard the commotion and turned their lights on and he ran. The girl, however, was dead from the blow on the head ~~with~~ which was believed to be a heavy limb from the tree which had fallen down. Now, hundreds of people were questioned in connection with this murder which shook Detroit, really. And it was played very big in the newspapers. ^{But} ~~It~~ ^{There} wasn't a clue--the~~y~~-in those days the police used to just round up people, bring them in, hold them for

investigation, question them, put them on the polygraph, and if they couldn't connect them, turn them out again. Let them go. There didn't ^{have} had to be any charge^s; they were arrested for investigation of a murder. And nothing turned up. Many times they thought they had the right person, only to prove wrong. Four years later a man who was an ex-marine named Philip Singer who lived in that neighborhood and who was well-known in the bars there as a quiet, happy beer-drinker. He worked in a linen supply company and was unmarried; lived in a rooming-house--was urinating on the sidewalk when two police arrested him; they asked him who he was; he gave his name; they said "where do you live?" and he says, "I live across the street"--this was 4 years after she was killed--I live across the street from where Jo Ann Gillespie was killed." They immediately thought- well--he did it. Because actually, the case was still open, and police were still working on that murder--not full-time, but part-time. So they took him down to the homicide squad--two ¹detectives ^(It later) who were assigned to the case, and began questioning him. Bayer came out--he was hit once, ~~threatened~~--he was given a lie detector test which the head of the homicide squad said was proof positive that he was lying when he denied that he killed the girl--which he did

at first, after he got down to homicide. After a couple of days of questioning, and threats and suggestions, he said yes, he did kill her. And then he gave something of a detailed confession. But before the confession, they gave him a polygraph--but the man who was in charge of the homicide squad said it was the most startling polygraph test he'd ever seen--~~only~~ when they asked him about the offense for which he was arrested, he answered--it showed a straight line. When we asked him if he killed Jo Ann, the line jumped all over. We showed him the results--we showed him he had lied about having been in a hotel with another woman that night--~~showed~~ ^{showed} he lied about that--finally he said yes, ~~he~~ ^I did it, I want to tell you all about it." Then when we put him on the polygraph again, when we asked him about Jo Ann, he said yes, he killed her, and the polygraph showed a straight line again. This of course is another of the many instances I was thinking ~~of~~ of a polygraph test being completely unreliable. It's called a lie detector--it does not detect a lie--it rarely works; I've seen so many people beat it one way or the other.

Now this--in this case--it victimizes a man. They then questioned him and he said that he had followed Jo Ann Gillespie that night

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as she was going up Fisher, going west on Fisher, and he jumped out and grabbed her by the throat and ^{the} waist and pulled her between the houses, and in the darkness he groped around and found a stone or a brick or a chunk of concrete--^{now} how these are--this is what he said. And he had a stick in his hand, and with that he battered the girl's head. Now the police up to this point had been maintaining that a part of a tree was the lethal weapon that he had found there. Because they did find the night they recovered her body--a club like tree trunk and they decided that was the murder weapon. Never had they said anything before in the 4 years about a brick or a stone or a piece of concrete. But at any rate he didn't know that so he supplied the weapon, battered her head. Said he fooled around with her as she was dying and disarranged her clothes. But abruptly, according to his confession, he went into a panic and ran away. He walked to his car and drove around for awhile, and at last and later he went to a hotel and stayed about 3 hours--he said he hadn't known Jo ann Gillespie and he didn't offer any reasons ~~why~~ for his sudden attack.

The newspapers got calls after this so-called confession--or confession--
~~was~~ *was printed* --
and from many of his friends, who said he was a mild-mannered man and

in-
incapable of murder, incapable of hurting anyone--he was well-liked;

he lived, as I say, in a rooming house, and it was only by drinking

beer and going with girls ~~wh~~ --an occasional girl--to an occasional

hotel. He was arraigned and put in the county jail. I printed his

confession, and it was released ~~to~~ *by* the police, and I talked to him

at the same time, and he said yes, the confession was true, that's

what happened. So after he was in the county jail ~~a~~ couple of days

after being arraigned on a charge of murder--I went over to see him,

and there was a little doubt in my mind by this time that he had

killed ~~him~~ her. I think the doubt was the fact that he was a mild-

sort of person, and from--I had talked to a lot of people in the

neighborhood who knew him--and from hearing what they had to say

about him--also ~~to his lawyer~~ *his employer*--that he was a kindly person, and

as I say, he was always doing things for people. And I ~~d~~ ^d didn't let

him know that I had any doubt about his confession at all, and he

went in and told me the same story over again. So I went back and

another--oh, like four or five days--and he ~~will~~ told me he did it--hadn't changed his story--but I could see something happening to him; he ~~was~~ getting--it was quite obvious, his appearance was changing because he was getting the alcohol out of his system.

He was a man who drank a lot every day. And there was a physical change in him--his skin cleared up--and he had a little blow that went away, and mentally, he was smarter. So I left and I came back in about a week. And just visited him again. And he said, "You know, I didn't kill that girl." And I acted as if this was indeed a great surprise--and said "How do you know that?" He said, "hell, I know where I was that night. I was so confused when the police told me I did it and they told me that that lie detector couldn't be wrong, and it showed I did it--^{therefore} that I believed when I told ~~me~~ them that, that I had done it. But ~~at~~ then during the questioning, I thought, no, I didn't, but they keep insisting that I had done it, and that machine that they put me on, they told me, said I did it. So I must've done it, I must've killed her and not remembered it.

But he said, "I know now that I didn't, my mind is clear--he'd then been in jail a couple of weeks or so, without anything to drink--

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and he said, "I know what I did that night. I did what I told them I did. I was in such-and-such a hotel, on Jefferson, a small hotel in that neighborhood and I was with this girl." And he named her. Gave me her address. He said "they won't believe me, but that's the truth. I didn't kill Miss Gillespie or anybody else." I went to see the girl and she backed up what he'd said completely. That she'd been with him all that ~~time~~ time. Now she was a waitress someplace, but she did have a reputation, and I thought it was kind of noble of her to say that she'd been sleeping with him when she knew it ~~was~~ eventually it would get in the papers. She said she'd testify if ~~he~~^{he} went to trial. I had gone to see his attorney previously and I got the feeling this man was innocent; I got kind of a shock when I went in and saw the attorney's office--he was a court-appointed attorney, by the way, because ~~the man~~^{Singer} had no money. He --the first thing I saw was a ~~big~~^{big} picture of Herbert Hoover in his office-- and then when I talked to him, he seemed very stuffy and I thought--and it came out that he had never, in his long career as a lawyer--he was in his late 50's, maybe 60^s--that he had never tried a criminal case,

and that he wanted to try one, he asked for this assignment, so
 --he was going to retire--
 that he could end his legal career [^] having tried one ~~criminal~~ case.

And I thought, Oh God, help Singer, you know. He ~~is~~ never survive
 the trial, even though I think he's completely guilty--this man knows
 nothing about the jungle that is Recorder's Court. ~~He~~ Knows nothing
 about the tactics ~~xxx~~ that are used, knows nothing about the way
 the police are going to testify, because they were [^] convinced, ^{that} by
 this time--they had some of them, the ones that were on the case,
 were convinced [^] that he'd done it. And this man might be a fine guy
 for--to be a corporation attorney--but he didn't know anything about
 this law, and the result usually is that the client goes to prison,
 when there's this kind of legal service. I say usually--in my
 experience it's been that way. But he --I didn't--he was kind of
 a guy I couldn't get very close to--and didn't really ^{want} ~~walk~~ ~~to~~ to-- ^{because}
^{I didn't know - but} there were a lot of things I ~~could~~ ~~have~~ ^{could've} told him that would've
 helped him. But I didn't want to get involved that way at that time--
 because I thought he might be--you know, making a speech like that in
 Lansing, I had told him so-and-so and so-and-so. And all during the
 trial as a matter of fact, I kept sort of arm's length from the guy.

It was amazing to see him Field work, however. The papers kept playing up the confession during the trial, and Singer, well, it was the defense's--or the police had testified to it--there wasn't much else--let's see, there wasn't anything else besides his confession and the fact that the girl ~~was~~ dead and that he lived in that neighborhood and that he was exposing himself--they chose to call it that--actually, he was urinating--but they made it sound like a sex offense--and he had been--by the way, here was just one example I recall of the testimony --one of the detectives on ^{the} ~~te~~ case said that yeah, he knew that Singer told him ~~what~~ that he'd been in WW II ^{with} in the Marines--which he had been--and he got shot in the tail--implying, of course, the detective witness implied that he was running away. On cross-examination, Phil brought out that the detective had never been in the service, but that it was-- a lot of people who were ^{going} ~~running~~ forward ^{well} ~~got~~ hit in the back from flying shrapnel and other stuff. Even that little rotten detail-- ^{they} tried to set this man up. It came the defense's time to have kind of ~~ess~~ ess defense, and the attorney Leslie Field called Singer in to see him. And he was probably the worst witness I ever heard in my life. He did everything to make himself look bad,

question
and answered every~~thing~~ wrong. He couldn't answer them better,

but he just seemed weak. He sounded guilty, everything he said--Manny,

you were there. He took a recess during his trial and they put him

back in the bull pen--I went back there and I said, "For Christ's

sake, I never heard a guy like this--are you doing this, do you

is this what -?

want to go to Jackson Prison for life--and I tried to tell him

to answer questions properly--without --I kept emphasizing, tell

the truth, because you say you didn't do it--make it out that way.

He went back in the stand, and continued in the ~~same~~ same vein--and

of

I thought he didn't have a chance ~~and~~ getting acquitted after his

own testimony. Field, however, brought the police in and he showed

one of them had hit him --
threats

that --a-correction had been made--that he didn't have an attorney,

he was never told of his constitutional rights--of course, nobody *one*

in those days was told *of course*
~~knows to this day what he was told~~--that unless he was ~~an~~ affluent

enough to have an attorney before he was questioned, he showed

the failures of the police to make any kind of a thorough investi-

gation regarding Singer. And eventually, the trial went on almost

ten days--oh, the girl who told me she was with him came in and

testified. And --that she had slept with him, laid her reputation

right on the line--and she was very convincing--and it appeared she

was convinc^{ing} to the jury. I thought she was at the time, but then I thought, no, she's still _____ and you can't overcome this thing. The jury went out and they ~~were~~ out two or three hours, and came ~~in~~ back with a not guilty verdict. And it's one time I guess in the ~~sorry with~~ where I was a little bit--well, I've been emotionally involved several times, but I was sort of sorry for this guy, because I ~~just~~ knew he didn't ~~do~~ do it. And that a certain policeman --no longer there, who was put out of the homicide shortly after that--and left the department not too long later--was just dying to get the ~~jump on~~ *JD Ann* Gillespie--case cleared up so he could take credit for it--and who allegedly said to a fellow pfficey^y--"The next guy who comes in and ~~confesses~~ confesses that thing is gonna go!" I'm sick of these phoney confessions. "Because every murder that was played up big in the papers would draw mentally unbalanced people who would ~~get~~ come in and want to confess. I had spent an awful lot of time disproving confessions. And this I ~~knew~~ ^{guess} was another one, although he knew after his brain cleared --he had ^{what} the ~~alcoholics~~ ^{alcoholics} call a wet ~~brain~~ brain. And it cleared after he was away from the liquor, and he became ~~a~~ different person--much sharper--but still a terrible witness. He was ~~freed~~ freed--the murder has not been solved--I'm positive he didn't

connected w/ the case now.

do it, so is everybody / Some of the homicide officers testified that two of them--and they weren't--they/ others wouldn't speak to him for a long time after that--^{that} but they had searched his room when they were out in the neighborhood and they were looking all over ^{every-} the place, and that there was no mud on his shoes, no evidence of anything, although to go between the houses that night, it was a rainy night, ~~they'd~~ there would have to be mud. His clothes would have to show something. It was the ~~wame~~ clothes that they found and there was no physical evidence at all. He was acquitted --and I was very surprised, really, that justice was done to a poor, friendless, ~~harmless~~ sort of guy. There was one ^{O.K.} ironic thing --the girl who testified that she slept with him that night waiting to hear the rest of the ~~xxxx~~ trial before he was arrested he had taken up with another gal--who was there every day. When the g trial was over and he walked out a free man, he walked out arm in arm with this new girl he had taken out and left the other one standing all by herself in the corridor--not even saying thanks, good-bye. (~~strange~~ voice says something). Yeah--remember that? It was a sad thing.

I think he was just--he probably didn't even see her--I don't know.
 But if there was anything a person should've seen, it should've been
 that girl who was pretty much responsible for his acquittal. There
 was one thing that I recall distinctly, again, the lie detector, ^{or}
 polygraph, was wrong. Many, many, many time^s--I can't say it enough--
 I gotta keep repeating.

MK: Was there any reference in the ^{course of the trial} ~~courts~~ to the lie detector?
It couldn't have been

RG: No, no. They couldn't have correctly referred to it in the trial.

MK: How did Singer explain the fact that he did confess? ~~He said that~~

RG: He said that they bullied him into it and that they told him his
 machine they put him on showed that he was lying when he said he
Therefore, he thought --
 didn't kill her. And he'd never heard of a lie detector in his life.

He was a guy --a pretty limited person--and he thought that because
 that's what he was supposed to have shown, that he did it.

MK: his attorney ~~he~~ came to a pretty tragic end not long afterwards.

RG: Yeah. It was tragic. I came to admire Mr. Fields greatly because
 of ~~his~~ his great skill and dedication to this case. And his
 intelligence --~~in~~ he tried a terrific lawsuit--I was quite wrong
 in my first appraisal of him--and incidentally--making inquiries about
 him I found that the picture of Hoover was sort of a gag on his part--

that actually, he was quite a liberal. ^{man -} He--was out in University hospital, undergoing ^{some} treatment, in Ann Arbor, and he committed suicide. Now I don't know whether they told him that he had something, that it was incurable, or why.

Strange Voice: His wife had ^{shortly before that} ~~making~~ _____.

RG: No, he didn't show any ^{depression} depression--and immediately when his wife, who was at home on the East Side--Indian Village--heard about it-- she went out in the garage and hanged herself. So the two of them were--it was after their honeymoon she had heard it.

~~MX: Strange Voice:~~ You said in their when you were talking to Field, you were convinced of the man's guilt. You meant innocence.

RG: I said what?

MK: This is September 30, 1971. We're going to go through the September 26 feature piece by Joe Wolf on the Collingwood massacre and raise those points that strike you as either incorrect or questionable.

RG: Yeah. I'll start at the beginning. The lead on the story that _____ was quiet. The _____ ^{hoodlums + goons and} ~~was~~ a musclemen ~~and~~ in _____ were hiding.

I had no idea what that was based on. My recollection is that it was from _____ business as usual. And ~~some~~ Grose Pointe to Wyandotte I had never known during Prohibition to be quiet ~~&~~ in all that territory. The

exact date we've gotta get ~~out~~ of the shooting on ~~and~~ Collingwood.

MK: We have that, I think, Ray, on the back of the police photo.

RG: Oh, I see. All right. Because in paragraph 2 I ~~mean~~'m not

sure ~~what~~ ^{just} he means. Harry Tray, Wayne County Prosecutor, was

always issuing orders for round-ups, and it didn't mean too much,

they'd just be picked up and released again. Now it was never

to my knowledge, the victims--to my knowledge, were never called

Navy -- it was a little Navy ~~to~~ ~~gangs~~ -
a little big avenue--~~Maybe, they were all~~ maybe. It was limited

to about those 3 --the 3 who were killed. Now Capone--pretty much

kept out of Detroit ^{not} because he was afraid of anybody here, but he

had all he could handle over in Chicago and in its environs, he

had enough business over there. ~~That's where he was pretty~~ That was where

he made his money; any more than he took over in New York ^{or} ~~of~~ Chicago--

I mean, Philadelphia. These men~~x~~ were the victims--and I'm going right

down the line in this story--they were brought to this place on Chicago

and 26th by leaders of the Oakland Sugar House Gang. The Oakland Sugar

House was the Purple Gang. As kids they used to hang~~o~~ut there. And

before anybody hung the name "Purple Gang" on them-- they were referred

to as the "Sugar House Gang" or the "Oakland Sugar House Gang."

They'd ^{hardly} be bringing in people to--a hired killer--and I'm not sure

just what that means--but I am sure that the purple didn't bring

~~they~~ ^{little} their own ^{little} Navy to Detroit. Now the old Navy gang as I

recall did many things--they sold alcohol, they were in gambling,

they were in extortion, holdups and shakedowns, but the Navy didn't

refer, as many people think, and I get the impression here-- to

the Detroit River. They didn't run the river, to my knowledge.

This was done by--and the Purples didn't go much river running--

^{all these} ~~always~~ people were busy making the stuff, both distilling whiskey

and making beer in Detroit or its environment ~~and~~ and running it--not

importing it--and making labels, and making --getting it bottled--

^{the} and sugar--and making--you know, putting it all together here.

It looked just--the bottle looked like Canadian liquor, you ~~don't~~

couldn't tell by looking at it--but it was made here. There was

^{all during} always trouble brewing --in prohibition--there ~~was~~ were shootings

and beating and a lot of trouble among gangsters--so there was nothing

unusual at that time. The Depression, ^{he mentions, strict} ~~and~~ the law enforcement was

^{law enforcement.} never strict. There was never strict law enforcement, ~~xx~~ in Prohibition--

but racketeers feuding among themselves from time to time. Almost

endlessly--you know, some big, some little. I guess he means that

they hijacked ~~them~~ --I guess that means that he --well, the Navy was doing this--well, they were doing about everything. However, that--didn't have much to do with ^{this}~~the~~ ^{her} shooting; _____ the shooting--at least, how Levine told it at the time, and it was accepted at the time, and they were convicted--the three or four ^{of} who were originally accused--the purple gang; were convicted, and the testimony ^{of Soely} Levine; it was said that the trouble was that the ^Little Navy gang had bought a large amount of alcohol from the ^Purples before the American Legion convention in Detroit and to supply the Conventioneers ~~in~~ the bars who served them and that they just wouldn't pay for it.

MK: Ray, would 50 gallons the figure--be too low? ^{by wolf}

RG: Be way too low. Yeah. Way too low. And --but the amount--I don't recall that any amount was named, but it was a large amount.

And the Purples were certainly capable of producing a large amount.

They had facilities and sources. But--the one thing that's important

here is, that they bought it, used it for the American Legion and

the convention was long over when this ^{Collinswood} massacre took place.

And the reason for it was that they just wouldn't pay for it.

Suddenly

According to Levine during the trial. Certainly a series of hijackings began, there were always hijackings. And these fellows were not hijacking anything from the ~~purple~~ ^{or they'd have} gang, ~~that had been~~ killed long before. This was the kind of thing that they ~~tried~~ to work out ahead of time, I mean tried to collect the money for it, and ~~falling~~ ⁱ on that, they just killed him.

MK: Ray, was it common to extend credit on bootleg sales?

RG: Among people who had established credit, yeah. Among dealers who knew each others and knew that their word was good. But whether the ~~Little~~ ¹ Navy and the Purples had any such credit arrangement over a period of time, I don't know. It would be possible--it would be quite possible that they could work out a deal, on credit, for a large amount of alcohol. Incidentally, ~~xx~~ this thing ~~xx~~ about the east side massacre (?) had been giving the Handbook a big play, and late August had put over Crowley (?) with several hundred dollars; well, he wouldn't--In those years of the ~~Depression~~ ^{Dep}--several hundred dollars probably wasn't a big deal for a ~~handbook~~ ^{Handbook}--and this one on Selden wrote a check, I'm not sure whether Levine was in business with the Little Navy in that ~~Handbook~~ ^{Handbook} on Selden, around 2nd, but that's where he was arrested, just a few hours after the murder by a detective

in Homicide, his last name was McMillan, I think. His first name was Bill, I'm not sure. He was ~~with~~ a Detective Sergeant in Homicide.

Strange Female Voice: I _____ I was crawling in, so I wouldn't disturb you.

RG: Just for a minute, and I say hello to. . .

The little Navy gang was a nothing sort of thing made up of only Septer, Lebowitz and Pollack. The --when they were murdered, and I arrived at the Collingwood Manor and before I went in and saw them dead on the floor, I --one of the detectives told me who had been killed and I had to stop and think, "who are they?" You know, they just weren't known in Detroit. They had no status ^{whereas} there. ~~But~~ everybody knew, through ~~the~~ publicity and through their activities, the Purple Gang and the individual~~s~~ who comprised the gang--but the Little Navy Gang was never heard of and look, I ^{was} supposed to know these people, and I had to stop and think, Well, who are they, and where did I see here about him, and it took me a long time to plac~~e~~ them. So they had --and they lived not lavishly at all, they lived in small apartments

in the inner city. The inner city then was a little different from what it is now. But --let's see, that was forty years ago, the building had 40 years longer to run down. But they lived on ~~the~~ streets near Harper and Grace Hospitals. Like Orchestra Place, of Alexandrine; now these streets that run east of Woodward--in apartment^s there. And it wasn't that there wasn't the great affluence in the underworld then, because of the Depression--you know, a lot of gangsters were taking in an awful lot of money, with prohibition, with gambling.

MK: Do you accept as accurate the statement that the reason the Little Navy welshed on its debts to the Purples was that they had been victimized in their hahdbook bperation by the so-called "East Side Mafia"?

RG: Well, I don't know if that happened and I think that Sector, Lebovitz and Hymie Poole welshed on a lot of debts. They were--lets' face it, they were pretty tough characters, and they probably ran out of money for some reason or another. Maybe they gambled it, maybe they just wanted to keep it, and they said "To hell with the Purp~~ose~~^{ose}, who are they?" You know, they just didn't pay them, as people did.

MK: But, I've never heard anything about the so-called East Side Mafia doing any business with them. I sort of have my doubts, because any so-called Mafia organizations and at that time there were --I've never known if Mafia is the word. But there were persons and Sicilian of Italian ~~ancestry~~ backgrounds who lived on the East Side and *the west side* that part of Detroit and were feuding and they had not gotten together in 1931 at all--they later did. ~~They~~ Now they were underworld people and --I think, however, that they were self-sufficient that they didn't have to bother with *punked like* the Little Navy, because these other men were much tougher, and I don't think that they'd have to depend on them for alcohol or anything else. Levine, I think, set the meeting up between the Purpbes and the--and incidentally, this says that all the guns were found in a paint bucket--My recollection is that only one gun was found in this. That they all --although the bucket of paint--or two buckets of paint--were left outside the apartment door, so that the assassins could get rid of their guns immediately. That only one took advantage of it. Now rumor had it at that time that Harry Fleisher g dropped his gun. You've got to remember that Harry Ffleisher--now he was charged with one of the murders,

but never tried. Because^d by the time he came back and surrendered, Solly Levine, the only witness, outside of Pollack had completely changed his story, and said that he told a bunch of lies. And ~~they~~ they tried to get a new trial. So the police didn't have a witness against Fleischer--they couldn't try him. Because Levine and the other witness that they had at the examination--Larry Pollack--was just driving in the alley as the four purp~~oes~~ allegedly were driving out--and ^{he} who would identify them at the exam^aination, because he knew them all--had changed his story at the trial--and said that yeah, he saw some men coming out, but they weren't the defendants, he knew them practically all his life; the ones he saw coming out were -- he thought, were a bunch of Greeks. And he was tried for perjury; and a very top criminal lawyer in Detroit at that time, ~~Rxxxx~~ P.J.M. Halley Jr. represented him and he was acquitted of perjury. Yeah, they were unarmed, the three ^little Navy guys, and they--apart from what they said to other people prior to the meeting--that they thought they were going to work out some deal with the Purples over the money they owed them.

MK: Do you accept as accurate Wolfe's statement that the three victims met Levine and his handbook and then all four proceeded--

RG: My recollection on that is Levine went with the Purples--rode up there with the Purples. But then, I'm not sure. He could~~he~~ have ridden with the so-called Little Navy because he set up the meeting with the--but I don't--I'm not sure of that. My recollection, however, was that he rode with the Purples, and that some police--actually, I thought ^{it} ~~he~~ was a cruiser--one of the cruisers--passed him, ^{and} saw him with the others. And then when --after the shooting, they wanted to look for the Purples--because there were some of the people in Detroit that --who worked with--you know, the police ^{would be} ~~were~~ suspicious of--and the cruiser detective said, "Wait a minute!" Solly Levine was with them, saw them driving in that direction prior to the shooting. So that's when MacMillan, who knew where to find them, got the handbook ^{on} ~~and~~ Selden and went over there and arrested them. And they had two good lawyers, when the thing finally went to trial. ^{Rodney} Robby Baxter--the late ^{Rodney} Robby Baxter, and the late Edward J. Kennedy--and Kennedy represented the Purples during their entire ~~existence~~ existence--but there's no defense. ^{is testimony} Levine ~~says~~ ~~it~~ was just

too strong. Plus some of the circumstantial evidence --the manager of the apartment--See, one of the Purples had gone and rented that apartment specifically for that reason. He rented it a couple of weeks before, so the thing ~~xx~~ had been set up. Had been planned a long time. Now, Abe Bernstein was the oldest of the Bernstein brothers. And he was supposed to be the brains of the Purple Gang. Abe was out of the city at that time --quite a while--and the feeling in the underworld was that if he'd been in town this wouldn't have happened, ~~xxx~~ or it certainly wouldn't have happened that way, because he would not have approved this type execution, number one, and he wouldn't have--well, he wouldn't have approved ^{this type} ~~the~~ execution, he wouldn't permit ^{er} his young brother Raymond to get involved in the thing ^{or} ~~with~~ the others; but he was away. Many people felt that way, that it just --the combination of circumstances; one, that they were killed, and two, that the others were caught. Circumstances which ~~couldnt~~ would've been avoided if he'd been in town.

MK: Who was it, Ray, who rented the apartment?

RG: I don't recall, it was ^{one} some of the--one of the Purples. But I don't recall --well, I'll have to look that one up. I knew at the time.

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. . . who the manager identified. And the apartment was 2649
 --or no, the apartment was at the northeast corner of 12th and
 Collingwood. It's still there. Looks about the same., on the
 outside at least.

MK: Is the statement accurate that after the murders the police engaged
 in mass arrests?

RG: No. I don't know what you mean by "mass arrests" but I have recovered
 stories in Detroit even where after certain type crimes--murder, I
 guess, all of those--literally, hundreds of people have been arrested--
 that I consider mass arrest. Now not all in one fell swoop--but over
 day after ~~day~~ day after day. The Goodrich murder of little ~~William~~ *William*
 Gallagher --for instance, the murders of girls, ^{of} murdered ~~with~~ some
 gangsters--there were hundreds of people. And ~~but~~ nothing like
 this took place. No, it wasn't long before they knew, the police
 knew who they were looking for. As a matter of fact, we--I had it
 in confidence--I had verification of it--shows how I got the story,
 in confidence--but I didn't print the names of the wanted ^{persons} until
 they were picked up. *There was* ~~I~~ *from* always cooperated with the police--although,
 I'm sure it didn't mean anything, because the wanted ones knew they

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were wanted. After Solly Levine was arrested, they figured he ^{must've} couldn't hold up under questioning. And Pollack couldn't either, because he testified at the examination. The police tactics then were different from police tactics since the Miranda decision-- they used a lot of force often to exact confessions, or information.

MK: There was also the statement that in departing the scene with Bernstein at the wheel, the car nearly struck a little boy.

RG: Yeah, a ~~the~~ little boy. ^{I vaguely recall that;} ~~They~~ It was a little boy, ^{not} ~~about~~ 4 years old.

MK: And the Wolf story elsewhere says that at the trial that kid was a witness.

RG: Yeah, I don't recall much, but almost hit him. I vaguely recall that, but I'm not sure. Let me see, it was Donald Van Zile, the late Judge Van Zile of Recorders' Court--a lot of quotes, to show you the judge when he sentenced the man, and I assume that he said these things-- it sounds like him--you know, a lot of clichés about murder's a pretty awful thing and my, my, my it's giving Detroit a bad name.

MK: Do you recall Keywell requesting the judge to send him to Marquette?

RG: No, I was there, but I don't recall that detail. I don't know why he would ^{ve} ~~be~~ picked him out to send him to Jackson. Unless he wanted

to do a favor for somebody, because ^{you see} Marquette is so far away, it's
very difficult for the family ^{yes} to get there to visit the inmates.

That's one of the hardships--it's also supposed to be a rougher
prison than Jackson. And it's old--but I don't know why he'd single
him out to send him to Jackson and the others to another place.

MK: Perhaps because--

RG: I know they all went to the same prison, and that was Marquette;
and that's different now. Now they go to Jackson; ^{they're} ~~there'd~~ sorted
out and ~~xxx~~ sent from Jackson to another prison. At that time they
were sentenced directly to a specific prison. . . . after they were
sentenced; of course there was a big--a good deal of speculation--
Solly Devine's dead and we'll be killed- and--in reprisal. I knew
something, however, and through the attorneys--everybody connected
with this thing--wanted him kept alive and well because they wanted
a retraction from him to base a new trial which they got and he said
it was--he was forced to testify ^{as he did.} But that didn't really convince
anyone--and the men served out their sentences. _____ died in prison.
and Bernstein died after his release. He'd had a stroke in prison,
a very old man, he served 32 years. Keywell served 34 years and was
released. And believe me, after that length of time in prison, they

come out vegetables, and that's it. Anyone comes out _____, not a human being.

NK: There's also some question about the accuracy of Wolfe's report on the subsequent history of Harry Fleisher.

RG: Well--

MK: He ~~has~~ has been convicted on a Senator Hooper murder conspiracy.

RG: I didn't think he was. We can check that. Three people went to prison conspiring to kill Senator Hooper. And they're all close

friends of Senator Fleisher? My memory doesn't put ~~Fleisher~~ ~~Fleisher~~

Fleisher in with them. He might have been. I can easily check it.

He--by the ~~way~~ way, they're finishing him up ~~it~~, but in case I

didn't ~~know~~ didn't--he disappeared after the Collingwood massacre, and

notice then surrendered, something like a year ~~ago~~ later--I ~~know~~ ~~that~~ this

article said that he'd surrendered at the City Hall--I don't know what

the hell he's doing--who he surrendered at the City Hall to. I remember

--the day I was there when he surrendered, I was told about it ahead

of time. He surrendered at the Prosecutor's office. And he had

affidavits that he was jail at the time of the murder in some little

town in Pennsylvania--but they didn't try him because they didn't have

any witnesses by that time. --Any reliable witnesses, because the

two who had testified reversed their story. No, I recall, he
his
was in Federal prison for--as a matter of fact, part of ~~that-is~~

Federal time was spent at Alcatraz when his brother Louis was there.

Louie got an awful ^{long} ~~lot~~ of time for having --he was arrested in Highland
Park with an automatic with a drum containing 20 or 40 shells and it
was an illegal gun--but because of his reputation he got a terribly

long sentence. And--~~do you remember what I said about him?~~ Did I
say anything about him? I said earlier about his ^{coming to see me} ~~not seeing~~ when
he got out?

MK: Yes.

RG: Coffee, Mike?

MK: No thank you, Ray. This is October 29, 1971. We'll be talking, Ray,
about a couple of Purple Gangsters, one named Abe Axler, the other
Eddie Fletcher.

RG: These two men were inseparable. They were both about the same height,
which was under normal height--not much more than five feet four,
five feet five inches. Fletcher had been a fighter and he was fairly
stocky. Axler, who was very sallow complected, was ^{thin} ~~as fat~~ and he didn't
certainly look like the tough guy that he was. Nor did Fletcher, although

they were considered to be by many trigger men for the Purple Gang. Fletcher came from Brooklyn, New York, and he was the only one in the Purples ~~what~~ wasn't a native Detroiter. Now ~~whether~~ ^{if} his right name was Fletcher or whether he had it legally changed, I don't know, but he always went by the name of Fletcher, all his arrests were by Fletcher, ~~and never went by~~ anything else. Axler was --and a few others were tried, ^{under} incidentally--on the so-called Public Enemy Law. When Harry Troy was prosecuted ^{on}--and they--the law was declared unconstitutional. If they were convicted, the convictions didn't go--I don't think they were convicted. But these two were really the tough guys --the ones to be feared most-- ⁱⁿ and the Purple Gang ^{setup} ~~get up~~, despite their lack of muscle--and they were very quiet--never spoke to people, unless they knew them very well. They were--it was reported that they were responsible for some gang murders, although they were never charged. They were also known as extortionists, and allegedly ^{dealt} ~~a gentleman~~ in narcotics; that again was not proved. Now the Purple Gang did not handle narcotics. They weren't in that racket. These two fellows who were ~~working~~ ^{with} for the Purples were allegedly dealt in dope and this might have ^{it was thought} been the reason ~~for their start~~ at the time--might have been the reason

why they were taken for a ride and murdered in Oakland County.

That murder was never solved. They were found in an automobile this side of Pontiac, parked on a side road sitting in the back seat, their arms linked, and two or three bullets in their head.

The strange thing about it was that Axler and Fletcher, according to those closest to them would not have gotten into an automobile

with anyone they didn't know and trust. And it was a divided opinion

as to whether they were forced or conned into this car or whether ^{it was}

somebody who knew them well. And they trusted, took them up,

and set them up for someone else to shoot them. Neither the motive

nor the persons responsible was ever definitely established. But

speaking of getting in cars--was I--tell about the one I talked to

dying--the gangster--that's odd. I thought that--this might have been

the case, of course, but they were thinking they could explain away

whatever grievance these people had against him, as with the case

of the man I referred to earlier who was shot and thrown out of a

car near Birmingham. Of course, the ones who were doing the gang

murders were just doing their job and they had no interest in their

merits of

~~maximal-merit~~--whether the man should die or shouldn't die--

they were told to go and dispose of someone, they did it. But

there is a saying that this was one way to get up in the organized

crime structure. You made your bones, the term was. That means

that you killed. Turned people into ~~bones~~ bones. And the more

proficient you were, I suppose the better chance you have of advance-

it's

ment. But none of those gangs--you know, I've written about Chicago

so often that more gang murders than any city ; hundreds of them.

only

None, or ~~any~~ one, was solved. Well, that was true in those days

all over the country. Those murders were ~~never~~ never solved. For a

lot of reasons. The person who did it was one who could be trusted

not to talk about it. They never --there were never ^{witnesses} weapons. If

someone stumbled on the scene, they'd dispose of him too, ^{So he} ~~we~~ couldn't

identify them. And if someone did identify them he just wouldn't live

to testify in court. Or he wouldn't be available, at any ~~xx~~ rate,

to testify. But they were professional jobs, they knew what they

were doing, they didn't wound people; they always used .45 automatics,

and bullets were always in the head. And as I say, there ~~were~~ no

witnesses, ~~as I said~~.

MK: Was there some special reason why the bodies were always found outside the city?

RG: Well, they weren't until recent years. Many of them were found

inside the city in those days. But I think that the murderers

learned the lesson--if they took 'em outside the city, there was

less heat on them, because it ^{meant that} ~~was not~~ the Detroit police--wouldn't

be involved in it, because it would be outside their jurisdiction.

If so many were found beyond the 8 Mile Road or just a short distance

outside, the gang murders, they'd be taken outside. Now ~~some~~ some--

many, as I say, were found right in Detroit but the big reason was that any

murder like that in Detroit would bring the Detroit police. They knew

more about working on these cases, they knew who the people were. They

gave all ^{hoodlums} ~~of them~~ a very hard time. Their rackets were closed down or

harassed greatly and the police just dddn't want murderers in Detroit.

Obviously, they didn't want 'em anyplace, but didn't want them in

Detroit to sully the record. Now, of course none of that's understand^{ed}

by these people who were killing in Detroit and establishing records.

But, yeah, that was a big reason police would --there'd be a gang murder, they'd arrest everybody that every gang^{order -}--they'd hold 'em, and if an attorney should get an ^{writ} arrest on 'em--they would get it extended in the court, release him and pick him up again, and they had pretty bad treatment while they were being held. Plus the fact that their handbooks, blind pigs, whatever racket the~~xxxx~~ they were in would be ~~put~~ out of business--it was ~~a~~ pretty rough. So they learned that and ~~if~~ when possible, it seemed, they took them outside

They of the city. ~~That~~ might've been murdered in Detroit, but there was no way to establish that. The~~xxxx~~ --something happened, when Jerry Buckley was murdered in the La Salle Hotel--this was of course during prohibition when every block had ^{its blind pig,} blind pigs or handbooks or houses of prostitution as well as street prostitution--it was considered a pretty open city, and I didn't think a thing like this could ever happen, but the day after Jerry was murdered at one in the morning ^{and by} ~~but~~ noon that day, there wasn't a blind pig in the city of Detroit open; there ^{early afternoon} wasn't a handbook open. There wasn't a house of prostitution open.

And I learned then that the ~~the~~ law couldn't be enforced. Now the police couldn't go around and close these ~~places~~ places; that wouldn't be taken way too long, and there are not enough police. They just sent out

the word, close. And they closed. And the only time that I've seen the laws covering vice, gambling, prostitution--and that was prohibition of course, with all the liquor running, and sale--it was illegal -- enforced 100%. And I never thought it could be done, and it was then. Now it probably couldn't be sustained--gradually, ~~durin~~ things started opening up again. The --after the big blast was off-- but they remained closed. The bootleggers--some of them got around it by keeping their place closed. I know one fellow that had a place downtown, he closed his blind pig but he stood out on the curb and ^{he} had half-pint bottles of whiskey, ~~xxxxx~~ selling them on the street. But really, the ~~xxxx~~ town was closed. And ~~xxxxx~~ ^{probably the only time} ~~that was the only town~~--since Cadillac arrived-- that it was 100% closed. And I don't think anybody cheated for a few days.

The word went out and the word was obeyed.

WL: Yes, we're recording today, Ray--this is November 5th.

RG: We were talking about the shooting of the ^{late} labor inspector, Henry

Jay (Hoe) Garbin that took ~~xx~~ place--yeah, Clark ran in-- _____

of the Times and I covered that story. And he was shot ^{in the morning} on his

way to work either on Piper Boulevard or he lived on Piper, wasn't

far from his home in a car, drove alongside and a shotgun blast-- *was fired*

at Joe. He was alone and driving his car and he fell on the floor

as a protective action
immediately. He was hit-~~xxxxxxxx~~ the bullets went on--from the

second blast--and killed a little girl on her way to school. And

I think she was killed, maybe just seriously injured, but she was

badly hurt, at least. Then Garbin of course said he didn't see

anyone, he didn't have any enemies--the usual thing --but it's so

often people you interview have been shot or their buildings have

been blown up, and they can't imagine why because they don't have an

enemy in the world. And ~~xx~~ of course, you know better. You know that

they know, but they just don't want to tell. Garbin had a lot of

enemies, he was very rough on people. And there was talk around

Grand jury
town that when the Ferguson ~~Gang~~ came into being several years later

after he was shot, that one of his main purposes was to "get Joe Garbin."

and they didn't lay a glove on him. And the story was that people were
 just afraid of him, afraid to testify. Of course, to be fair, there *maybe*
 just wasn't anything they could do--there wasn't anything they could
 testify against, for him having done wrong. But he then was in
 Receiving Hospital for quite a while, recovering, ~~and~~ ^{and} when he ~~came~~
 back to duty his assignment with--he was given another detective--
 and his assignment was to go out and find the people who shot him.
 He was never--he never found them--they were never found. There was
 a ~~xxxx~~ feud in the police department--Bert McFersson, another inspector,
 who had been Garbin's partner, he had worked with him.--and friend.
 They had a great falling out. And were bitter enemies. And people
 at police headquarters told me that when the word ^{that he was shot} came in on that
 particular morning in 1930 it must have been, the first thing that
 McFersson said was "My God, I'll be blamed for this." But now that's
 about it, we did the usual things on the story, you know, talked to
 people and people and people and couldn't find anyone--

~~papers~~ papers,
 WL: Did any of these ~~papers~~ ^{papers} on the Times or another paper have a break
 on this story, or did it break evenly?

RG: Not that I recall did we have any break. If they had a break, it would be on the shooting itself, and that would be the man at police headquarters, who picked that up, because you know, having went there, he would come in to the--it was then called the B.B. desk --at first--and they'd notify a reporter. So I don't recall any-- the only kind of a break--what kind of a break could there be? Description of a car? You get that by having reporters out in the neighborhood ringing doorbells; if you didn't get any--if the police had already gotten that, you'd get it by their arrest or capture of the persons who did it. And nobody was ever arrested or prosecuted for the shooting. *him*

WL: Ray, there's a--

RG: It varies--as to why. As there always are.

WL: Ray, you talked about the little girl who was killed?

RG: I'm not sure she was killed. ~~Do~~ Have you got that down? Did she die?

WL: I'll tell you, we can look it up here. Here's a shake down part-- Shooting a Garvin Lake River guy--schoolgirl on street wounded.

RG: Did she die later?

Reel 8, Page 4

WL: "She probably will die" it says. Now I didn't follow her through, because it wasn't really--

RG: Why don't we be safe and say "critically"?

WL: Yeah, she was critically wounded. Well, she was wounded but not killed.

RG: Oh, did I?

WL: Yes.

RG: All right. That's probably true.

WL: No no, excuse me. You gave Garvin wounded but not killed.

RG: Oh, yeah.

WL: The girl killed.

RG: Well, I may be wrong. She might not ^{have} died.

WL: You also have Garvin ^{given} ~~given~~ the assignment of finding out who tried to kill him.

RG: Yeah--that was in all the papers.

WL: If you really need that point, I'll check it out for you.

RG: I--what's her name? Is it _____?

WL: Let me see.

RG: I know she was in the hospital--in Receiving--but I--

WL: Lois Bartley ^{H.} B-A-R-T-L-E-T-T.

RG: Lois Bartlett.

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. . . she was on her way to school.

WL: I can check that out any time. I don't want to hop, skip around too much, but there are some things I'd like to get cleared, and then I want you to give me a general description after that, of how newspapermen like Carlyle and yourself and McIntyre and Armstrong and so on were able to live both in the world and ^{with} ~~in~~ the underworld and not really create a situation where you're liable to get bumped off yourself. Now if you want, you could maybe talk a little but on that subject, since I brought it up. I know what Carlyle says, that he's a great friend of Pete ^{Licavoli} ~~Lecchivoli~~ and says he is ~~get~~ today and Joe Zarelli really hates him, and so forth. Well, it didn't really come through clearly to me how you could maintain the relationships. . .

RG: Well, I can explain it, I think; at least as far as --talk about myself--

and this would apply to Jack--and would apply to some of those other guys ^{had} ~~have~~ a lot of enemies--but Jack got along pretty well. Is this

on ? ~~Am I talking?~~

WL: Yes.

RG: Am I talking? I think I can explain how that ^{worked} ~~--it was~~ because of two things: one, we would never, never break a confidence. We would never tell the cops what the robbers were doing, or the robbers what the cops

~~Reel~~

✕

to people in connection with crimes--the people who are ~~gonna~~ *going to*
sit in the jury ~~and gonna~~ *are going to* read now what you've got to say--and
this is the last time they're going to hear about you unless
you take the stand during the trial. And this is ~~your~~ change
if you want to take it. That's to print both sides and try to
be fair about it.

WL: All right now, we know the town was wide open as far as bootlegging
is concerning.

RG: Bootlegging, ~~haha~~ handbook, crap games, prostitution--it was an
open city.

WL: And you know you could walk right across the street from police
headquarters and go into a blind pig. And that the News--I think
we had three blind pigs within a stone's throw. And a whorehouse
right ~~around~~ *on* the corner. Knowing all this, what was the newspaper's
attitude about these places operating. I mean, did we try to close
them up? It's difficult for me to go back over the years--I know, *and figure*
occasionally, there'd be a raid.

RG: Well, what happened was this. The Free Press would occasionally

blast away at ~~xxxx~~ an--illegal enterprise--maybe one. The News

would go on periodic crusades ⁱⁿ and Macomb County and Detroit against

blind pigs, maybe--but usually against gambling. The ~~xxxx~~ Times

was completely indifferent, feeling that we were now a law enforcement

agency; but when the police did it or flagrantly failed to do it,

we'd report it. But until some ~~Senate Commission or some Commis-~~

sin of commission--or sin of omission--was flagrant, ^{we didn't do it--} we didn't have

crusades. The News would. For instance--now I can't verify this

except at the time, I believe it was true--I still believe it's

~~xxxx~~ true--Charley ^{Bowles} Bells was ~~xxxx~~ mayor--and of course, ^{during} ~~at~~ that

time, the city was still in great turbulence--everything was going--

gambling, prostitution, blind pigs--but that wasn't the first time--

in my life that it had been an open city. And the mayor, as ~~is~~ custom-

ary, throws out the first baseball at opening of the ball game.

And I ^{was} told at the time that the News invited the Mayor over to

the roof of their building--it was a nice, sunny day--and gave him

a Tiger's baseball cap and had him--^{simulate} ~~similarly~~ throwing out the first

ball-- used his picture; and the first day ~~at~~--I mean the opening .

day of the ball season--and they ^{wanted to get it ahead of time} ~~had a time~~ so they could get it in

and early enough edition--and he went over and went through the motions.

Now, they wanted to get him out of the office, so they put a
 photographer in his office to take a picture right across Monroe
 Street--that is Monroe that goes around there, isn't it?--from
curves
 his office window of the biggest handbook in Detroit--in downtown
 Detroit--probably anyplace in Detroit. And that --those pictures
 were--that picture was splashed all over page one of the News--of
 this handbook that you could see from the Mayor's office--but the
 mayor--the implications *that he was fiddling while Rome burned-*
 whether there was a coincidence that the
 picture was taken when he was on the roof of the Detroit News--I
 don't know, but I'm told it was, and I assume this like this were
 commonly done--it then it would go on for several days, but a clean-
 up of gamblings in Detroit--and then it would just sort of ~~trickle~~ *trickle*
 out, or drop off-or something else would be more important--but of
 the three papers, I'd say the News was more crusading against vice--
 that is, in my time. And the Free Press rarely--the Times not at
 all, unless some crime happened in connection with it, and then
 everything would be in the paper. ~~x~~

WL: I want to shut this off for a minute--you want to shut that off,
 because I want to --

RG: We were talking a little while ago about publicity and the

hoodlums' reaction to it--now I know that many could be

hurt, many could be conned--they were very vain people; we

know they were vain, of course, ^{most of them,} and they liked to be made

a lot of--but I don't know ^{in my experience--I know} ~~I know~~ don't know a lot of

lawbreakers--my God--hundreds--hoodlums--and I cannot think

of one time when they told me a story--told me what happened,

when they wouldn't remember right--keep me out of k it. And

stories about--well, I did hear of a couple who had sort of

become retired and whose daughter got married and wanted her

picture in the society pages and something like that--but in

connection with ^{their} her exploits. Now, my experience was that

they wanted to be kept completely out. And I think--if you

read ^{Gay Talese's} ~~Gates Elice's~~ (?) last book--the Honor Thy Father--

the same thing runs through his book, too. His experience was

similar to mine. ^{They feel} He told me, but--and I don't have to go out of

my way to disguise the things that take--try to ~~xxxx~~ throw
this sort

away from where it actually was without implicating anybody else.