

# Whitlow Confession

### Strange Statement of Man Accused of Murder of Miss May Sapp at Moran, Kansas.

Moran Kas., Nov. 2.—The secret statement by S. F. Whitlow, explaining his version of the death of Miss May Sapp and written before he was arrested on a charge of causing the tragedy, is pronounced by students of criminology in Kansas as the most extraordinary human document ever brought before the courts of the State.

It has just been made public by Prosecuting Attorney Carl J. Peterson, to whom the police gave it after finding it in a cupboard in the Whitlow home, where the prisoner said he had concealed it in the expectation that his wife would find it after his death.

When he wrote the story of the clandestine and, at times, awesome wooing of him by the girl, he was possessed of a firm determination to end his life.

A reign of terror was upon him, according to his statements after his arrest. The shock of being compelled to witness the girl's terrifying suicide with a razor was followed by the fear of being found out.

Dozens of officers, citizens and detectives were seeking "the man in the case" and bloodhounds had been brought to the scene to trail him to his home.

**Found Bloodhounds Were After Him**  
Whitlow, a respected business man of the village, had not yet come under suspicion. But he had already told his wife that he had been present when Miss Sapp cut her own throat.

Each was in terror lest the bloodhounds should be baying the next minute at their very door.

What Whitlow wrote was a secret even from his wife, for through it all ran the spirit of weariness of life that revealed a determination to end it all.

From the first Whitlow was convinced that the story of his relations with Miss Sapp would become public, and that suspicion would require from him proof of his innocence of her death. He had covered his path to and from the scene of the tragedy well and no one in the little village really thought of him as holding the secret.

But from the first he read suspicion in every eye and every shoulder shrug. He was haunted by the fear that what he knew all knew. Such suspense was more terrible than death, and his only relief seemed to be suicide, after assuring himself that his name would be cleared.

**Why Suicide Plans Miscarried.**  
Preparing the statement was a gigantic task and occupied days of his time. But it eased his mind, and, when he found himself still free after he had finished the story, it began to occur to him that, perhaps, he might never be suspected. Anyway, the peril did not seem so great as to justify him in ending his life. So he postponed his suicide.

But, while he was enjoying this reassurance, the law suddenly descended upon him and charged him with Miss Sapp's death. He tried then to carry out his plan by delinking wood alcohol, but the physicians saved his life, and now a jury will pass on his story.

There are various opinions of Whitlow's statement in Moran. Many persons express belief in it. Others doubt whether it is all it purports to be and assert that Whitlow wrote it so that he might learn by rote. It follows in full, precisely as Whitlow wrote it:

"I had from boyhood a strong religious desire, and a pride in being upright in every respect. But at the very time I thought I was beyond danger of being imposed upon I was made the victim of a school scandal that pretty nearly broke my spirit, but by choking down my feelings for several years I had as I thought recovered my old standing.

"But then came an unexpected trouble. About two years ago (1905) as I passed the home of J. N. Sapp, his daughter, May, was in the garden near the fence, and she requested me to come to the yard fence that evening, that she had something to tell me. I agreed to and met her that night.

"To my surprise the poor girl told me a pitiful story of how she had loved me since she first knew me and that she would not care for anyone else. That she had turned away different suitors just because of me. I told her that she must not do that. That she knew I was married and could not be anything to her, but she said she could not help it, and I must come and talk with her a minute or two a week.

"I went a few times and tried to argue and reason her out of the no-

tion, but could not. I became alarmed and feared that another talk would start if I should be seen talking to her at dark.

**She Began to Follow Him.**

So I began to stay away from that part of town and after a few months Miss Sapp came night after night to my place and would walk by and go back. But later she rapped on the barn one night as I was choring after dark. I went to the gate and she was very angry and struck me in the face, because I had not been back to see her. I told her I did not intend to ever go again, and I went into the barn and began milking. She got over the gate and rushed into the barn and snatched my glasses off my face and ran. I was dazed for a moment and then ran after her and caught her and demanded my glasses, telling her I would have her arrested. She threw them away and it was dark and I could not tell where they went. I got my boys and Johnny Rees to hunt for them the next day. Johnny Rees found them. They were all twisted up.

"A week later she came again along the walk and whistled for me and I went out and she was penitent and begged me to forgive her and come to see her. She declared that she could not and would not live if I did not. I walked part of the way home with her, pleading with her not to do that way. I told her how deep my love for my wife and children was and how sacred I held those ties and obligations. She said she could not stand it.

**Knocked on His Door.**

"Time passed on and she continued to make a few visits, always with the same results, until the present summer of 1907, when she became more determined to take me away from my family. She ventured to knock on my door and then hide. This caused my folks to be afraid. I did not feel as if I could tell my wife all this, so I kept it a secret.

"She was met by my oldest boy as he reached the yard one night as we came from church. She had been in the house and threw some rugs on the dining table. This put my family to talking a great deal about who it could be and what they were up to. I feigned the same curiosity.

"The next evening I went up and signaled her to come to the gate and I told her not to do that anymore and pleaded with her, but she said she could not live if I did not come away with her. I told her I could not, that I had one of the best and truest wives that ever was and I could not. We could only talk a very short time there because there were people passing so often, so I would just leave and go home when anyone appeared.

"I began planning to try to get out of it without any talk getting started. I told her if we were seen together that it would start a talk and cause her folks and mine no end of trouble. She said she did not care anything for her folks or anyone

(Continued on page 7.)



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