# Movie Pictures Story of One of Oregon's Most Notorious Convicts, John Omar Pinson

### By CONRAD PRANGE

Staff Writer, The Statesman "He was a brutal, vicious criminal and we are not trying to glamorize him in any way. He is no hero!"

Those are the words which open a movie-due in Salem this week-based on the life and crimes of one John Omar Pinson. Pinson is an inmate serving a life term in the Oregon State Prison on the eastern edge of Salem.

The movie is "Gangbusters." It was made by the same people who produce the well-known radio show of the same name.

It tells the unpretty, if interesting, story of a man who shot an Oregon state police officer. set fire to Oregon state prison, escaped from the same prison, was once rumored to have been buried in a lonely grave, and is now behind bars again.

The movie hangs as close as possible to the known facts about Pinson's career in crime. However, in some parts of the film version some liberties have been taken, probably in the interests of interest and story.

### Name Familiar

Name Familiar To anyone who read the local Creates Hollywood Sensation mewspapers in years from 1947 to 1951, the name of John Pinson may have been a familiar one. He figured in all sorts of prison trouble, including atous benefits than any other star in have the words-all the words. tempted escapes, riots and finally Hollywood. Yet at her most recent You have the truth. And a little in a successful crash-out.

one she talked instead of singing. beauty and a lot of love of man. Even while hunted as an It created a sensation. escapee he was involved in one of the most bizarre episodes of many of the biggest names in Hol-Oregon's somewhat lengthy string of odd penal happenings.

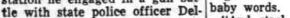
He was born Omar August Pinson, March 31, 1918, at Jop- for a copy of her talk. lin, Mo. The only son, police records state, of respectable, middle-class parents. An uneventful boyhood, spent near Pomeroy, Iowa, ended the hard way in 1936, when he was sent to Iowa State Training School for house-breaking.

the word was God.' And since then said. "Only, the quarters designed In 1941 he was sentenced to a a billion, million words have been for me are minute and Chris' guarbrief term in Iowa State Prison for auto tampering. He had marcold words, warm words. ried and moved to Pasco, Wash., where he worked as a lineman jump and skip and dance-gay and electrician. words: Little girl words. And words with fun in their eyes and small way, to keep the price of

### Paroled in 1945

But in 1944 he was sentenced things in their pockets and their wheat up. The town long has been to Washington State Prison for hair mussed: Little boy words. burglary and paroled in 1945. Young Words

After a couple of more scrapes with the law Pinson, then 28, wise old words with a glint in with the law Pinson, then 28, wise old words with a glint in propmaster, is looking for all the found himself in Hood River on their eye. There are words wide- wheat he can find in the filming the night of April 25, 1947. While eyed with wonder, soft as a baby's of the Biblical epic "Joseph And Ross observed. trying to break into a service feet, strong as a baby's twining His Brethren," Rita Hayworth's station he engaged in a gun bat-



the site to Idaho. that area. Led Police Astray

confused."

In the audience at the time were

John Omar Pinson, convicted mur- for a grave near Salem.

Ann Blyth's 'Poetic Sermon'

probably has sung at more religi- burlesque man; lead him. You

Written by Ann and her doctor the plans of her son Christopher.

was almost a poetic sermon. Her plans to co-workers at Columbia

COLU.

top acting Oscar.

Let's look at some xcerpts: Bee." The teenager drew "'In the beginning was the word, plans at boarding school.

"There are words that sing and counts on having."

God into darkness."

the giant size soda fountain he

Hollywood may soon help, in a

responsible for the high price of

derer now at the Oregon state About this time Pinson made penitentiary, whose life story is the FBI's 10 most wanted list. pictured in the new movie Several months later he shot his "Gangbusters." way out of a roadblock at Polson,

He said that shortly after the Mont., and became No. 4 on the that Pinson is "doing good time." escape he had buried the fatally- FBI list. His days of freedom He's apparently settled down and wounded Pinson in the woods were numbered.

near Kellog, Idaho. Or, rather, Following a tip-off from a girlfriend Pinson was recognized in parole. His only other possiat first he said he buried Pinson near Salem, and later changed Webb City, Mo., in April, 1950. On Aug 28 the hounded fugitive Officers were skeptical. A Spowas nailed by a alert special

kane, Wash., detective was agent who spotted Pinson as the quoted as saying he had positive escapee was going to register a proof that Pinson was very much car at alive and up to his old tricks in S. D. car at the state capitol at Pierre,

"Can't Trust Anyone"

Benson, however, in an effort Benson, however, in an effort Bood," Pinson was quoted as Of Information to prove his story led police telling officers after his capture. through woods and remote areas "You never stay in one town of the Idaho panhandle and more than one night. You can't through parts of western Mon- trust anyone you meet." tana in search of the "grave." He Pinson was returned to Oregon finally told weary police he was State Prison. On the night of Oct. 31, 1951, a group of 20 cons States Information Agency is put-

When he was returned to the overpowered seven prison guards ting America's "worst foot for-Oregon prison he led local ofin a futile atempt to escape. Pin- ward by trying to duplicate the ficers on an unsuccessful hunt son was singled out by the then job being done infinitely better by

Lead him. Lead not the child of For Dismissal

warden Virgil O'Malley as the the independent U. S. news agenringleader in the Halloween night cies," Roy W. Howard said Satcaper. This was his third at- urday.

Loses Plea

tempt at freedom. Howard, chairman of the exe-"I guess I'm a failure at cutive comittee of the Scripps escaping," Pinson was quoted as Howard newspapers, has just resaying at a prison discipline turned from an around-the-world

committee hearing the next day. tour that lasted six weeks. A failure at 34. The word at the prison now is secretary, Howard arrived at noon

by Pan American Airways from Paris. By JAMES BACON HOLLYWOOD (m - Ann Blyth say it, you lead the way. Don't Publisher Howard told reporters the U.S.

Point Four program is "one of the most effective good - will builders." By contrast, however, he said the U.S. Information Service program of the USIA is contributing virtually nothing to U.S. prestige abroad.

is "cooperative." As a lifer he

is eligible to be considered for

bilities for legal freedom are

executive clemency (remote in

**Editor Critical** 

**Agency Tactics** 

NEW YORK (UP)-The United

this case) and death.

"I would be the last one to suglywood, plus Los Angeles' Cardinal McIntyre. When she finished most a young architect—but she may In the she may is the mother of the she may is the mother of the she may is the she may of the 1,500 people present asked find herself a bit crowded if she urday denied a motion for a direc- seem to me this whole USIA probuilds her new house according to ted judgment of acquittal in the gram could properly be the subtrial of Las Vegas Sun publisher ject of investigation by Congress." husband, Jim McNulty, the talk This week, Joan showed Christ Herman M. (Hank) Greenspun. As an example of what he had Greenspun is accused of having seen, Howard cited "one country, delivery of it was superb drama. where she is making "The Queen sent through the mails 874 copies which I don't want to name, which Bee." The teenager drew up the of his newspaper containing a has a claimed literacy of 12 per column written by him which the cent of the population. We have and the word was with God, and "The plans are great," Joan government contends was of 150 persons working for USIA "indecent" character in that it there. About 17 of them I am told. "tended to incite murder or assin- are Americans. The man who is spoken. Soft words, hard words, ters are tremendous because of ation" of Sen. Joseph McCarthy. running it is an intelligent news-Greenspun's attorneys, in seek- paperman who is trying to do the ing the acquittal, argued that con- best job possible in the circumviction of the publisher would stances. Every day he is deluged violate his constitutional guarante with thousands of words from of free speech and freedom of the USIA-most of it more than 36 hours old-which has already been adequately and completely covered On this point, Ross observed, with every privilege goes a re- by the United States news agen-

cies. What he tries to do, consequently, is concentrate mainly "Newspapers have a great many on pictures, newsreels and carprivileges, as well as they should,' toons.

Howard said "all three Amer-"With these privileges, however, ican news agencies are doing a newspapers should exercise care magnificent job of telling Amer-Thousands of tons will be shown and caution so that your privilege ica's story, but they are con

STATES.	STA	RG	AZE	R***
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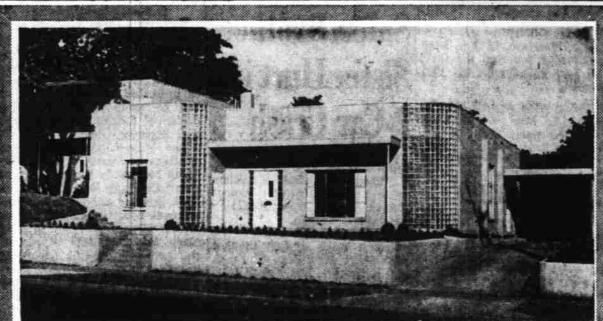
Strong Sales Technique

COLUMBIA, S. C. (B-Gordon L Chatterton who sells lumber for a couple of western firms unloaded 37,000 board feet from a freight car in a single day. William L. Boozer said the job usually takes three days. The Boozer lumber yard had been faced with heavy demurrage charges when Chatterton volunteered to do it in one.

Local people watched bug-eyed as Chatterton worked and estimated he handled 56 tons of lumber between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The salesman, a husky graduate of the University of Washington, worked his way through school as a longshoreman, Although he still varies his sales routine by taking on unloading jobs, he says he had not unloaded a car of lumber for four months before tackling Boozer's freight.

JOEY TOMPKINS Photographer of Everything 1680 Hubey o Salem, Oregon **PHONE 2-8071** 





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mond E. Rondeau, 32.

A bullet in the chest killed thrusting, stinging, lancet words; Rondeau. Pinson fled and a day cruel blades of words-and sweet later was captured by a posse of words. Soothing unguent words; officers near Ordinance as he father, mother words: Words that tried to slip out of the area press their cheek against yours and hold your hand: That candleaboard a freight train.

Pinson was tried and convicted light your darkness: That raise of first degree murder. A jury you like a child again and hoist saved his life be recommending you onto their shoulders. . . 'Words are everything that man life imprisonment. Pinson was is; everything he can be-they are quoted as saying he didn't mean eveerything he should not be. They to kill the policeman. Rondeau are his slave; they are his master wasn't there to answer. -in a world of the mercy of the

Tried to Crash Gate

cer.

Shortly after his arrival at the of words. Oregon prison at Salem Pinson Infinite Wonder

tried to crash through a yard "'In the beginning was the gate in a prison truck. In the word,' all the infinite wonder and fall of 1948 Pinson and seven beauty and truth and love and life other cons set fire to the prison that God is, uttered-expressedflax plant in another unsuccess- in one divine word. This is the ful attempt to escape. truth. And by its nature, every Then shortly after midnight on word should be a reflection of the

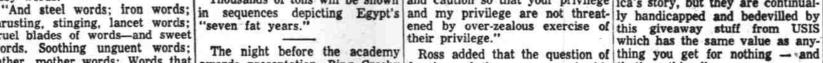
May 30, 1949, Pinson and a pal, divine truth. William P. Benson, 44, serving ". . . I plead with the press to five years for armed robbery, remember-powerful words. That climbed over the prison wall and words are written about men-and

escaped, as the papers said, "in read by men. a hail of bullets." Pinson had "I plead that infidelity is not engineered the escape from the new; it isn't even news. It's scan prison bullpen, which is sup- dal. That a decalogue broken on posed to be a tough nut to crack. the front page helps no one and

About three months and sev- hurts many. . . That sensationalism eral thousand tips later Benson is not brilliance. That sensational was found lying in a Columbus, ism and emotionalism and carnal Ohio, alley. At a hospital he said ism are a direct appeal to man's he had swallowed poison because baser part and the betrayal of a he thought he was dying of can- trust.

"You are the light bearers, mer

word of God man is at the mercy



awards presentation, Bing Crosby freedom of the press was in his that's nothing." offered Marlon Brando 100 to one opinion "a matter outside this odds that Brando would win the case."

press.

sponsibility

He noted in addition that many The bet was not taken. of the arguments made by defense attorneys for acquuittal had been

The movie industry, in a big ruled upon by the court at two way, is starting a move for indusprior hearings at which motions for dismissal of the indictment against the publisher were denied. try sponsorship of the academy awards telecast. One important studio executive

"If successful, you'll hear the a quick 'thank you' and get off commented this week: winners make speeches next year the stage in time for the commer- heart, liver, skin, stomach, kidney if they want to-not just mumble cial."

ened by over-zealous exercise of this giveaway stuff from USIS which has the same value as any-Ross added that the question of thing you get for nothing - and

605 S. Commercial St.

DR. SEMLER Says:

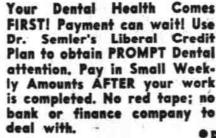
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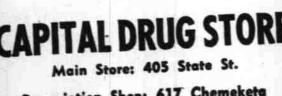
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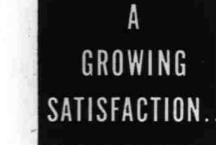
CROWNS PLATEWORK FILLINGS INLAYS \* X-RAYS BRIDGEWORK



alf-way

\* No one wants to drag along in a state of halfway health. Resolve now to see your Doctor, heed his experienced counseland be really well again. And, of course, bring us your prescriptions for careful compounding.





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### WHAT IS VAULT ENTOMBMENT?

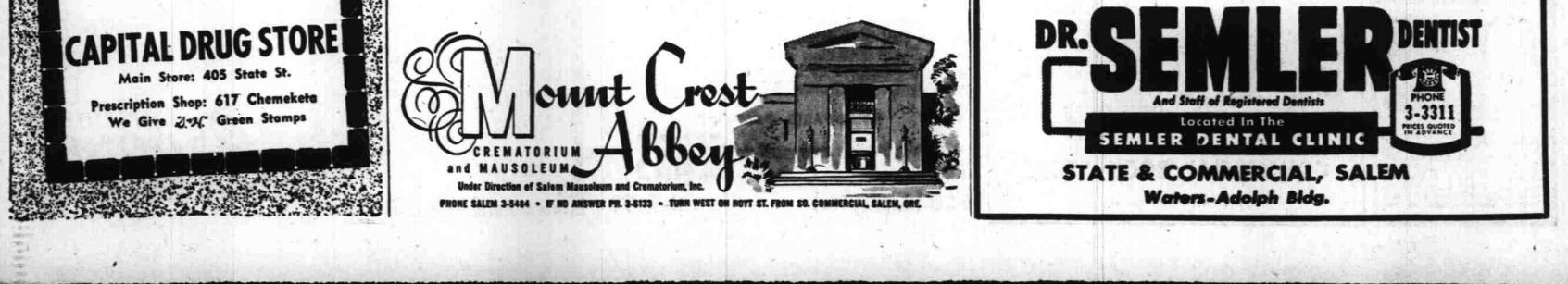
Your loved ones are placed in a permanently sealed casket (not cremated) in a vault of your choosing. The vault is also sealed and covered with polished marble, which may be engraved with name or epitaph. The vaults are in a room of constant beauty completely sheltered against the elements. You may visit the Abbey any time ... your floral offerings are always protected. Ethics and culture agree that vault burial is the most considerate way and a never-ending source of consolation to those left behind.

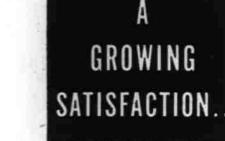
### WHAT IS CREMATION?

The act of processing human remains, leaving only indestructible matter. This is then placed in bronze urns and kept in a private niche in the Columbarium as a permanent memorial.

## WHAT IS PRE-ARRANGEMENT PLANNING?

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