

Bedwell Says He Didn't Kill Grimes Girls

Claims Confession Was Forced by Beatings From Officers

CHICAGO (AP)—Edward (Rennie) Bedwell, illiterate young Skid Row dishwasher, says he did not kill the Grimes sisters and the lengthy statement he gave to sheriff's officials admitting the slayings was a lie.

Bedwell testified in Criminal Court yesterday that he signed a 14-page confession after four days of questioning because "the sheriff's men beat and kicked me."

The 21-year-old derelict retracted the confession at a hearing on a writ of habeas corpus before Chief Justice Wilbert F. Crowley.

His attorney, David E. Bradshaw, demanded that Bedwell, who is charged with the murders of the Grimes sisters, Barbara, 15, and Patricia, 13, be admitted to bail on the ground that his purported confession is obviously false.

Bedwell was on the witness stand when the hearing recessed until today.

In the statement which Sheriff Joseph Lohman said Bedwell signed, he and a companion named "Frank" had taken the Grimes sisters on a week-long sex and drinking spree.

On the night of Jan. 13, the statement said, they beat the sisters and dumped their bodies alongside a rural road southwest of Chicago. Their nude, frozen bodies were found Jan. 22. The girls had been missing from their home since Dec. 28.

In his testimony yesterday, Bedwell said he had never seen the Grimes girls. He said he and "Frank" had taken out two girls of Indian descent, who have been identified as the girls of the double date.

Lohman denied Bedwell was beaten and said Bedwell lied on the witness stand. He said he still considers Bedwell the prime suspect in the case "even more so now than when we first took his confession." He did not elaborate.

Bedwell testified that during questioning after he was picked up Jan. 23 he had several times denied any connection with the crime. However, he said he was kicked and slapped by sheriff's officials and threatened with further beatings.

"I had seen pictures of the dead bodies and of the scene and I also had the story read to me by a woman in a restaurant. (Bedwell cannot read) and I remembered parts of the story and I made it up fitting myself into it," he said. "I then used Frank's description and occupation, the guy that was with me with the Indian girls, so he'd figure in as the second guy."

Bedwell identified "Frank" as William C. Willingham, 26, an acquaintance who now is serving a city jail sentence for drunkenness. Willingham has admitted he was with Bedwell and the Indian girls but denied having ever seen the Grimes sisters.

Medical evidence disclosed at an inquest has discounted several of the statements in Bedwell's confession announced by Lohman last Sunday. Preliminary findings of an autopsy indicate the girls may have died within hours after their disappearance from home.

Beaver Marsh Extension Irks Congressman

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Federal Power Commission was accused Wednesday by Rep. Porter (D-Ore) of "an act of effrontery to the citizens of Eugene, Ore."

He was referring to the FPC's grant to the Eugene Water and Electric Board of an 18-month extension of its deadline to start construction of the proposed Beaver Marsh power project on the McKenzie River.

Porter and Oregon Democratic Sens. Morse and Neuberger have opposed the project.

Last March, Porter said in a statement, Eugene residents "turned out in greater numbers than in any previous special election in the city's history to deny finances for this questionable venture."

The congressman said the Eugene board also has "shown disrespect" for Eugene residents. He asked that the board give assurance "that no attempt will be made now or in the future to exercise this power."

The FPC extended from Jan. 1, 1957, to July 1, 1958, the date by which the board must start construction of the project under terms of its federal license. In seeking the extension the board said it was needed because voters defeated its proposed bond issue at an election last year.

Conservationists have strongly opposed the Beaver Marsh project on the ground that it would despoil the McKenzie River watershed's scenic resources.

The project, which would have an installed generating capacity of 30,000 kilowatts, would cost \$8,532,000.

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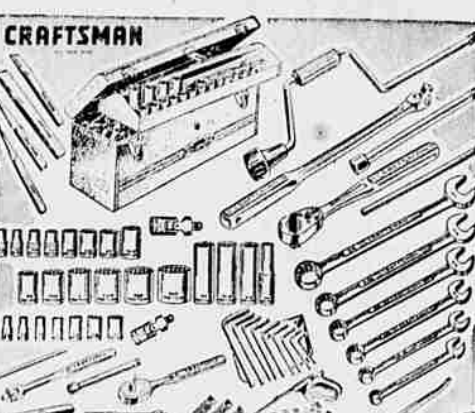
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