



# OPINION

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## Offbeat Oregon History

Portland man hailed as a hero for murdering sister's ex-lover

### The Unwritten Law Files

BY FINN J.D. JOHN  
For the Sentinel

This column is one of a series of case studies of the early-20th-century mania for honor killings. It was popularly known as "The Unwritten Law," and it was a social convention that permitted and/or obligated a man to murder anyone whom he knew to be working to seduce his wife or sister. Unwritten Law cases arose around the country in the 1890s and were alarmingly common until around the time of the First World War. Today's column discusses one such case, which took place in Portland in 1906.

Early in November 1906, 21-year-old Orlando Murray went to pay a call on a 22-year-old acquaintance named Lincoln C. Whitney. The main subject of their conversation was to be Murray's 16-year-old sister, Mary. Secondary topics for the two men's tete-a-tete included wedding bells and a baby shower – not necessarily in that order – and, last but not least, a .38-caliber revolver.

The conversation did not go well.

Whitney had met Mary when she'd traveled from her Portland home to Hubbard, where Whitney lived, to work in the hop fields for a week. Whitney had,

Orlando Murray said (and, later, testified), sweet-talked the cute young out-of-towner into bed with fair promises of marriage, then disappeared as thoroughly as he could. Meanwhile, several weeks after their brief liaison, Mary suddenly found herself in a very awkward position.

"My sister told my father that she was threatened with disgrace unless Whitney could be induced to make good his promise and marry her," Murray told the Morning Oregonian. "My father and Mary went to Hubbard. Father talked it over with the elder Whitney and then called the young man himself. Whitney laughed in my father's face and said he would not marry my sister. Mrs. Whitney then came out, called my sister a vile name and insulted my father."

The young Murray said that when he learned about the situation the following week, he decided to settle the matter one way or another. So, once he tracked Whitney down, he gave his best shot at persuading the

young Lothario to, as the saying goes, make an honest woman of the girl he had seduced. This Whitney steadfastly refused to do. Murray said he pleaded with him, appealed to his moral sense, and finally offered him money – all to no avail.

Then he pulled the .38. Not even then would Whitney agree to marry the girl, Murray claimed. So Murray let him have it. Three shots, all lethal hits.

Then Murray hurried to the sheriff's office and turned himself in. And the next morning, newspaper readers across the state read the details with breathless avidity. It was the opening act in yet another drama made possible by The Unwritten Law.

### A family circus

If Orlando Murray had hoped his conversation with Whitney would save his sister from public shame and humiliation, its outcome was rich with irony. Murray's subsequent murder trial bore a more than passing

resemblance to a circus, with a main attraction (the trial); sideshows (including a fistfight involving the defense attorney) and numerous clowns and jokers, both on the witness stand and in the crowd of onlookers. The whole sordid story – replete with insanity, sex, alcoholism, hysteria, and of course murder – was unpacked before capacity crowds of very interested spectators. Mary twice suffered hysterical breakdowns and had to be removed from the court.

Murray, of course, pleaded not guilty by reason of temporary insanity – the classic Unwritten Law plea. In entering it, his attorney claimed that "when he saw all chance and hope of Whitney's making right by marriage the wrong he had done the young woman, (Murray) was suffering from emotional insanity, and not responsible for his murderous act," the Oregonian reported.

The defense's moral case was bolstered by widespread accounts of Whitney having boast-

ed of his "conquest" of Mary Murray. Its case for the insanity plea was bolstered by the bizarre sideshow spectacle of Orlando Murray's aged mother testifying that insanity ran in Murray's family; her brother-in-law, she told the riveted onlookers, "died a maniac at Salem, while another brother served a term in the Salem asylum," the newspaper reported. She further testified that Murray's father (whom the newspaper never names) was compelled to give up his medical practice three years earlier because of "mental incapacity, brought on by excessive use of alcoholic stimulants."

Perhaps it's not much to be wondered about that Lincoln Whitney didn't want to marry into the Murray clan.

Others, however, did. Murray's attorney's office was soon flooded with marriage proposals for Mary, from all over the state – most likely from lonely bachelors working in logging camps.

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## Eating for beautiful, healthy skin

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD  
For the Sentinel

The skin is the largest organ of the human body and a barrier that protects the body from microbial pathogens and other damaging elements. The health of the skin is a reflection of one's overall health, and the skin's resilience to sun exposure and outward appearance can be enhanced with high-nutrient foods.

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S., affect-

ing one out of every five Americans. Ultraviolet radiation from the sun promotes aging and carcinogenesis via oxidative stress, inflammation, and damage to DNA. Ultraviolet (UV) exposure also leads to alteration of the skin's structural proteins, causing sagging and wrinkling. Taking proactive measures such as using a safe mineral sunscreen and limiting mid-day sun exposure are crucial to protecting your skin from the sun's UV rays. Phytochemicals from natural foods can provide an extra source of protection, by enhancing the body's natural defenses to help prevent sunburn, and its associated dangers, and by slowing the aging of the skin.

Carotenoids are one class of phytochemicals that offer pho-

toprotection. After we consume carotenoid-rich foods, carotenoids accumulate in the skin, where they oppose UV-induced oxidative stress. Individual carotenoids, mixed carotenoids and carotenoid-rich whole foods have been shown to have photo-protective qualities that prevent or repair DNA damage to the skin caused by the sun. For example, lycopene, found in tomatoes and pink fruits such as watermelon, grapefruit and papaya, helps to protect the skin from sun damage. Similar results have been found for lutein and zeaxanthin, found in leafy greens, and beta-carotene, found in yellow and orange vegetables.

In addition to carotenoids, another class of antioxidant nutrients—polyphenols—may have photoprotective actions. There are hundreds of polyphenols, and they are present in most whole plant foods. Polyphenols from cocoa and green tea, for example, have been shown to counteract UV-induced skin damage in human studies.

Wrinkles and other signs of skin aging are related to chronological age but also strongly influenced by UV rays. It is estimated that 80 percent of the visible aging in a woman's face is due to sun exposure. The phytochemical-rich foods that offer sun protection also offer some protection against wrinkles. In one study of older adults, higher intakes of vegetables and le-

gumes and lower intake of dairy and sugar were associated with less visible sun damage. Another study assessed skin aging in middle-aged American women, and found that higher dietary vitamin C intake was associated with fewer wrinkles. In a study of Japanese women that related dietary variables to "crow's feet" wrinkling, higher intake of green and yellow vegetables was associated with fewer wrinkles. In studies on green tea and cocoa polyphenols, in addition to UV protection, these interventions improved appearance factors such as elasticity, hydration and softness.

Structural proteins in the connective tissue of the skin are also affected by diet. There is preliminary evidence that beta-carotene reduces the levels of one such protein that promotes skin wrinkling. Also, tomato paste supplementation was found to reduce the activity of an enzyme known to degrade structural proteins in the skin, presumably slowing skin aging.

### Healthy-looking skin

In spite of the well-known damaging effects of the sun on our skin, many of us still perceive a suntan as healthy-looking. Food-derived carotenoids can also affect our skin coloration, and new research has

shown that carotenoid-colored skin is perceived as healthier and more attractive. In the wild, carotenoids are responsible for the bright feather colors of male birds, which make them more attractive to potential mates. There is a much more subtle, but similar phenomenon in humans. An increase in carotenoid-produced skin coloration was consistently found to be perceived as healthier in people of Caucasian, African and Asian descent. One interesting study found that people preferred the skin color caused by eating carotenoids over the skin color from a suntan. Another study investigated skin carotenoid coloration changes in response to increased fruit and vegetable consumption. They found that photos of individuals a few weeks after increasing fruit and vegetable intake by three servings per day received higher ratings of health and attractiveness than "before" photos. Furthermore, the improvement in appearance has been shown to be a motivating factor for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, as reported in the journal Health Psychology.

### Maintain skin antioxidants with consistent healthful eating

Each time the skin is exposed to the sun, some carotenoids are "used up" for their antioxidant, so they must be constantly replenished by the diet to maintain the protective effects (smoking and alcohol also deplete additional carotenoids from skin). Consistently consuming antioxidant-rich plant foods will build up the stores of these protective phytochemicals in the skin. You can even quantify your skin carotenoid levels using a specialized scanner to confirm the accumulation of dietary carotenoids in your skin. I use one of these scanners in my medical practice to confirm that these beneficial phytochemicals have accumulated in the skin of patients as they increase their consumption of carotenoid-rich foods. A Nutritarian diet is designed to be rich in antioxidant phytochemicals and promotes health inside and out, protecting against chronic disease and sun damage while giving the skin a natural, healthy-looking glow.

Dr. Fuhrman is a New York Times best-selling author and a family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. Visit his informative website at [DrFuhrman.com](http://DrFuhrman.com). Submit your questions and comments about this column directly to [newsquestions@drfuhrman.com](mailto:newsquestions@drfuhrman.com). The full reference list for this article can be found at [DrFuhrman.com](http://DrFuhrman.com).

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Personal attacks and name calling in response to letters are uncalled for and unnecessary.

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