

The bandit seemed unshaken as the sheriff accused him of murder.



Case of the Dead Man's Clue

In this eerie story, a criminal is brought to justice by the man he killed!

By WILLIAM T. BRANNON

THE MISSING PATROL car was found outside a roadhouse in Anoka County, Minn., by sheriff's police. Slumped behind the wheel was the body of Deputy Sheriff Ernest Zettergren, who had died from a single blast from his own service revolver.

A quick canvass of the area revealed there were no witnesses, but the sheriff knew the deputy had not taken his own life. A broken window in the roadhouse attested the visit of a burglar, and the sheriff quickly pieced together what had happened to his deputy.

Later that day, William Anderson, an ex-convict, was picked up at his home in Minneapolis and brought to headquarters, where the sheriff was waiting.

"You don't know what you're talking about," Anderson cried, when the sheriff accused him of firing the fatal shot. "Why would I want to kill that deputy?"

"You know as well as I do," the sheriff replied. "Do I have to tell you?"

Anderson shrugged. "You might as well get it off your chest," he told the law officer confidently.

The sheriff reconstructed the crime for the suspect:

Anderson had stopped at the roadhouse about 3 a.m. Monday. He figured there would be a lot of money held over from the weekend business. The place was dark, the road deserted. The only thing that stood between Anderson and the cash inside was a catch on the inside of a flimsy window.

The burglar got out of his car, walked around the roadhouse to make sure that it was deserted and there were no hidden

alarms. Then he went to the window, broke the glass, and unlocked the catch. He raised the window and hopped inside.

Suddenly, a police car drew up in front, but the officer didn't get out immediately. Watching from the dark interior, Anderson became impatient and finally went outside to investigate. As he approached the car, he found himself looking into the barrel of a gun.

The burglar side-stepped, grappled with the deputy, and wrested the revolver from him. Then the gun was turned on the officer and one fatal shot was fired. Wiping the revolver to make sure it would carry no print, the killer dropped it on the seat.

THE SHOT had attracted no attention. The killer got in his car and drove away, congratulating himself that he had committed the perfect crime.

When the sheriff had finished, Anderson said: "It's a good story, but what makes you think I did it?"

"Zettergren told us all about it."

Anderson looked startled. "How could he? You said you found him dead."

"We did. He told us before you shot him—on the two-way radio. He saw you inside that broken window. He called in and told us he was going in after you."

"That doesn't prove it was me. I never saw that deputy in my life—and he didn't know me."

"That's right. But just before you shot him, he gave us the license number of your car. All we had to do was trace it—and there you were."

Anderson confessed and was sent to prison, where he had ample opportunity to ponder modern police detection.

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