

Arsonist Awaits Judgment of Society for Burning Tenement

BY ALBERT E. KAFF
United Press International
Manila—(UPI)—Just before day-break on a Sunday morning in September, 21 men, women and children died in one flash of fire.

They perished screaming for help in a rotting rooming house where the wealthy once lived. They were killed by an arsonist.

Why would a man pour gasoline on the stairway of a lodging house where his neighbors slept?

Why would his landlord and a national magazine of wide circulation in the Philip-

ppines look beyond the arsonist for the blame?

It was, said the magazine and the landlord, a story of a man lost in poverty and a tragedy of the city slums, blocks and blocks of mansions decayed into tenements.

The grandeur of old Manila has fled with the automobile into the suburbs, where lawns are wide and the air is fresh.

Street peddlers and pickpockets live today in the rubble of the 16th century walked city of Intramuros, once the home of Spanish bishops, governors and generals.

Laborers and drifters pay a few dollars a month to sleep on floors where debutantes once were introduced to the aristocrats of high society.

One of those old stately homes burst into a fiery coffin on a Sunday which Manila long will remember with dread.

An itinerant photographer, his lungs infected with tuberculosis, waits in city jail for judgment to be passed on his deed.

Locked Door
The arrested man, Gavino Dorado, 48, told police he returned to the lodging after a night of lonely drinking and found the outer door locked.

It was raining. He could not enter and sleep in his rented cubicle, built with plankings between a toilet and a window.

What kind of a lodging was it? In one rented room, too small for a bed, two married couples, one baby and a bachelor slept side by side on the floor for \$10 a month.

Another roomer, a tinsmith, prowled the halls nightly with a flashlight, disturbing sleepers in his apparently crazed search for a wife who deserted him long ago.

Locked out, Dorado went to an all-night bar. He brooded that night over cheap wine about his loneliness in a big city, the death of his wife 14 years ago and the unfriendliness of his fellow poor who lived, slept and ate amid odors from clogged sewage pipes.

Commits Act
At 5 a. m. he returned to the lodging and committed his act of arson.

The Philippine Free Press, a weekly magazine with half a century of Scotch, American and Filipino editorship, said, "Behind that holocaust is the tragedy of a city that is no longer a home but just a lodging house."

The magazine said, "By abandoning his old home, the old Manila (original resident) doomed it to a slum. By yielding his city to people with no roots in it, he suffered it to become what it is now: a city of squatters, a city of lodgers."

"The 21 dead were the victims not merely of Dorado's rancor but of the postwar blight that has turned Manila into one of the most dangerous places on the world to live in."

Hdefonso Tierra, landlord of the destroyed house spoke philosophically. He said:

"Society is to blame. Dorado is the victim of the greed of the wealthy. Not only Dorado but all the people who died in the fire—they are all victims."

"Dorado was penniless, homeless, hopeless, friendless and desperate. He was starving in the midst of plenty. If I were a lawyer, I would defend him."



CONTROL TOWER ADEQUATE—It might be the jet age but this improvised air traffic control tower is adequate for the operation of this forward airstrip in the North East Frontier Area of India. Small groups of duty crewmen operating under their officers provide maintenance as well as tower services on this strip which under normal conditions could barely accommodate an aircraft. (UPI)

Oregon Supreme Court Decisions

Salem—UPI—The following action was taken by the Oregon Supreme Court here Wednesday:

Reversed and remanded back to Jefferson County Circuit Judge Robert H. Foley was a ruling which allowed landlords Vern B. and Velethia M. Moore to terminate a lease with Richfield Oil Corp., and regain possession of their property.

A decision from Marion County Circuit Judge George A. Jones which voided the conviction of Gordon Jerome Kloss on a charge of statutory rape was reversed.

Kloss had been convicted in Multnomah county, and sentenced to nine years in prison, and appealed because he was not given a psychiatric examination before sentence was imposed.

Similar Decision

Also reversed was a similar decision by Judge Jones involving Ernest Enyart. Grounds of reversal were the same. Enyart had been sentenced up to 20 years on a statutory rape conviction, and the high court ordered the sentence reinstated.

Affirmed as modified by the Supreme Court was a case involving Security Es-crows, Inc., Multnomah County Judge P. K. Hammond enjoined the two firms from preparing or filling in blanks on printed forms.

Lower court decisions upheld by the high court today were:

Dismissal of a taxpayer suit brought by Robert C. Standberry before Washington County Circuit Judge Avery A. Combs against the Sylvan School District in opposition to a school reorganization plan.

Dismissal of an action by G. B. Isenhart brought before Multnomah County Circuit Judge Alfred T. Sulmonetti against the General Casualty Company of America. Isenhart alleged the company had breached its insurance contract.

Conviction Upheld

Conviction of Chester Raymond Hedrick on a charge of assault with intent to rape. Hedrick had charged Multnomah County Circuit Judge Virgil Langtry had allowed errors in proceeding with the trial.

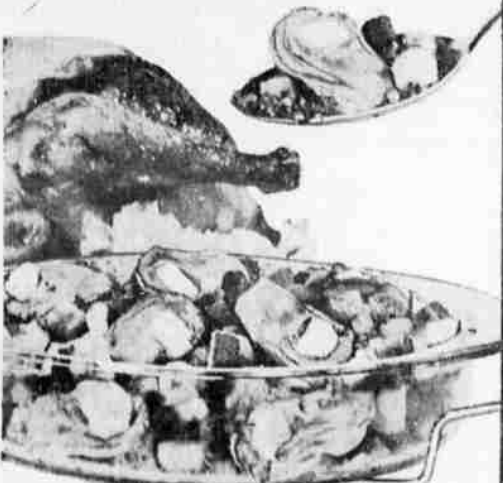
Denial of a petition for writ of habeas corpus brought by Paul Courter Holland, a prison inmate, against the sheriff of Coos county, Coos County Circuit Judge Robert

C. Belloni had ruled Holland's conviction and sentence on charges of burglary and rape were proper.

Affirmed the conviction of Virgil Nelson before Lane County Circuit Judge Lyle R. Wolff, on a charge of assault with intent to rape a 9-year-old daughter.

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Large 8-oz. Jar **69^c**
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