

# Four Give Statements in Tourist Car Slaying of Mrs. James on Saturday

## Pvt. Harold R. Wilson

Statement of Private Harold R. Wilson, U. S. Marines, concerning the murder of Martha Brinson James on the Klamath-bound West Coast Limited Saturday morning. Private Wilson was detained here over the weekend as a material witness.

Q. Your name?  
A. Private Harold R. Wilson.  
Q. What was your berth on this train?  
A. Upper 13, Car D.  
Q. You got on at Portland?  
A. Seattle.  
Q. What time did you go to bed?  
A. I'd say between 3 and 4.

Q. Had you pulled out of Portland yet?  
A. Yes, 1:30 p. m.  
Q. What was the first thing you knew of this?  
A. When the lady screamed I rose up and turned light on. I leaned over and looked through curtain, pulled it apart and looked down. Seen about half a man getting out of her berth, still so surprised from that scream kind of glanced at him. He went to rear of car on a run. As he ran he kind of turned little sideways so I could get just sight of his face. Pretty full. Had on brown pin stripes. Think about 5 feet 10 inches. He had short hair kind of pompadour, combed straight back. Light so dim I couldn't tell whether light negro or dark white man. Then when I glanced down seen this lady sitting on the floor with her left elbow on the left side of the arm of 14 lower bunk. She was sprawled out with right arm resting on bunk itself.

Q. Which way facing?  
A. Head toward rear of car. And then I was already on deck at that time. Put on my trousers and shoes, jumped down and grabbed a pillow from lower 14, placed it in the aisle and with my hands grasped her below the armpits and lowered her to pillow. And I saw the left side of her neck. I saw the scar. I stepped back and said this is murder, stop the train.

Q. About that time the lights came on. The porter came and stopped dead in his tracks and says, "She is dead." I said, "Grab a sheet," and he got a sheet from 14 empty and placed it over the body. The last I seen of her she was gasping for air and the blood was gushing out of her. So I told him, "You stop the train. You go that way." In the meantime I gave him the description I recalled and said "I am going this way," and I went to the rear and in doing so I went to the last car. Coming back, met with cook in the galley, and stopped and asked him how long he been working. Said he was later than usual. I told him this was military information I have to have, murder committed. He asked me if I had been drinking. I asked if he had seen a man pass with blood on him, gave him description, said he hadn't. Then I went on talking about the murder and when I came back this other marine was just getting up. They were in 11 or 12, and he says "are you a marine?" I says, "Yes." We shook hands. We talked about the murder then.

Q. You sent the porter forward?  
A. Yes, to get aid.  
Q. Did you hear any words?  
A. No sir. When I awoke it was from her scream, and that is how I woke, that's how I woke.

Q. Pretty dark in the car?  
A. The end dim lights were on, and it wasn't pitch black, but sort of dim so I could see what I was doing. When he went, got about five feet, so from the door, the light was brighter and I distinguished the color of his suit. I imagine he was about five, five ten.

Q. About how heavy?  
A. Very heavy, 175 or 185. Of course his suit coat might have been larger than looked. It was loose. He could have been more slender.

Q. See any blood on his clothing?  
A. Didn't notice—didn't see, or a weapon. It was a whisk, and he was gone.

Q. Have blood on you?  
A. Had blood on my hand.  
Q. Look in her berth?  
A. No sir. After the body had been taken out the porter was in the car. I wanted to show the young lady the berth and he wouldn't let me in.

Q. Seen anybody since that you think might be him?  
A. No sir.

Q. TOPEKA, Kas. (P) — Gale Thompson of Topeka, dreaming of far-away lands, enlisted six months ago as a yeoman third class in the navy.

He promptly was sworn in and ordered to recruiting duty at nearby Kansas City.

His long awaited transfer finally arrived. He was assigned to Topeka.

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## Heard Scream



William Van Dyke, wounded marine corporal, who occupied lower 12 and heard Martha Brinson James scream just before she was killed.

## Cpl. W. Van Dyke

(Below are questions and answers put to and given by Corporal William Van Dyke, Oakland hospital, a marine who was with his wife in berth 12.)

Q. What did you first hear?  
A. First thing I heard was a scream this morning.

Q. Any words?  
A. Just, Oh God, he's killing me, and this blood-curdling scream.

Q. Did you look out?  
A. Not immediately, about a minute. I was a little dumbfounded. I looked, leaned over, and saw the streak, blood streak, showed the curtain back. My wife said, "See anything." And I said, "You, but honey, don't look. Just as I rang the bell the marine above hollered this is murder, stop the train."

Q. Did you hear the other fellow hit the deck?  
A. Nothing but the scream.

Q. Did you hear something about can't stand it?  
A. Yes, I can't stand it any more, Oh God, he's killing me.

Q. When this boy (marine) hollered where was he?  
A. That I don't know. The minute I looked out I asked if he was a marine, he said yes. I shook hands with him, he had blood on his right hand, but not on his left. Whether he was in his bunk when he hollered I don't know. Before I stuck my head out the berth.

Q. Were his shoes tied?  
A. That I wouldn't know. Well, the lady screamed. I waited about 50 seconds before I let out a peep. I was too damn nervous. Then I didn't ring the bell until I saw the sheet and it took a minute to ring the bell. The minute I ring the bell he hollers.

Q. Let's put everything to work! Sell the articles you don't use through a classified ad.

## Ensign G. A. Keaton

Statement of Ensign Glenn A. Keaton of Eudora, Ark., member of Ensign James' squadron, last of Mrs. James' friends to see her alive.

Q. What is your name?  
A. Ensign Glenn A. Keaton, US navy air corps.

Q. Did you know Ensign and Mrs. James?  
A. Yes, mam. I had known the James about one week. He joined our squadron at Anacortes, Washington, about a week ago.

Q. Was Mrs. James with him there?  
A. Yes, she was. They were both from Norfolk, Virginia, and had been on the west coast for a couple of months.

Q. Did you know Mrs. James very well?  
A. No, I didn't. She lived near us at Anacortes but she'd only been there about one week. I didn't know her first name, just called her Mrs. James.

Q. Can you describe Mrs. James?  
A. Yes, I can. She was a beautiful blonde girl. Not very tall, maybe about 5 feet 2 1/2 or 3. Not a big girl, small and awfully pretty.

Q. Did you see her in Seattle?  
A. Yes, I saw her in Seattle as we were all ready to leave and then they told our wives, Mrs. James and my wife, Janice, that they couldn't board the train with us as it was a troop train. I got Janice Pullman reservations but Mrs. James couldn't get reservations. We left Seattle at 4:10 and they left around 4:30.

Q. When did you next see Mrs. James?  
A. Well, they told us that our trains wouldn't stop in Portland at the same time, but I thought maybe they would and I waited up in Portland. That was about 1:30, I guess. I was worried about Janice and wanted to see if she was alright. When I got off the train I didn't see Janice as she had gone to bed, but I saw Mrs. James and she was up-set because she hadn't a place to sleep. She was awfully excited and worried. I told her if she couldn't get a berth to go and get in bed with Janice and she'd be all right. Then she turn and ran back to her train and that's the last I saw of her.

Q. What was she wearing when you saw her, Mr. Keaton?  
A. She was wearing a leopard coat and some kind of a grey suit with a brown "beanie," a little cap on the back of her head.

## Eugene W. Norton

Herewith is statement, in part, of Eugene W. Norton, 155 Winchester street, Daly City, Calif., who was a passenger in upper berth 7 of the death car.

Q. What do you know about it?  
A. The first place I was getting off at Eugene, my destination for the day, got on the train in Portland. I was on berth 7 upper in car D. Then about an hour before we got into Eugene I was awake but just a few moments after that, can't tell exactly, this woman hollered and says "I can't take it any longer." Immediately following she screamed my God, this man is killing me. The "killing me" was a very wheezy sound, whisper, and then I immediately put my head outside the curtain and the first thing I seen was seemed like a dark object back there. But I was in upper 7 and looking at an angle. Thought it was a person. Then, looking down closer, seen it was a marine with hand underneath her putting something white under her head. Then he got up and was evidently trying to find a light, then hollered stop this

train and then he says "This is murder, stop this train." Believe he repeated. Then I asked the porter and this marine to block the train on both ends, afraid somebody might pull cord and stop. That was first thought in my mind. After getting hold of conductor he came back and took statement off of me and I believe one of the MPs came back about that time.

Q. This first cry you heard was it very loud?  
A. Quite loud, loud, enough to be more or less audible from that distance, and don't believe it was more than half a minute until she said "This man is killing me."

Q. Did you look out immediately after that?  
A. Yes, it looked more or less like a man going through the back but it might have been a curtain bulged out. Possibly it was a man.

Q. Was the marine dressed?  
A. No, he had on a white undershirt, a pair of pants and I believe a pair of shoes.

# PROBE CENTERS IN K. F.; THREE HELD IN CASE

(Continued From Page One)

soon to go overseas. Officers were looking into his background seeking any clue that might have a bearing on his story, which he told repeatedly and easily.

The point which seemed to concern officers, particularly, was the speed with which Wilson pulled on pants and shoes and got from his upper berth after hearing Mrs. James' scream. First witnesses who looked out saw the marine placing a pillow under her head, an act which he described in his story.

Sequence Reconstructed. Police said that, essentially, the following is the sequence of events on the West Coast Limited:

Mrs. James, daughter of a prominent Norfolk, Va., family, was following her husband of four months, Ensign Richard F. James, also of a prominent Virginia family, after a routine navy transfer from Seattle. He was on the southbound train ahead of the West Coast, which she took at Portland after some difficulty in getting accommodations.

About 4 a. m. Saturday as the train neared Tangent, Ore., two men in berths nearby heard Mrs. James exclaim:

"I can't take this any longer," and then, "My God, this man is killing me." A scream followed.

Eugene W. Norton, who occupied upper berth 7, said he heard all of this and looked out of his berth. (See statement on page 3.) He said he saw the marine placing a pillow under Mrs. James' head.

Col. William Van Dyke, a wounded marine who occupied berth lower 12 with his wife, also heard the words and scream from lower 13.

Police at Los Angeles today quoted Robert Folkes as follows in an Associate Press dispatch: Folkes told police he boarded the train at Portland last Friday night, had a few drinks and went to bed after setting his alarm for 3:15. He said the alarm did not go off and he did not awaken until 4 a. m.

Officers said the cook told them he started through the car in which Mrs. James was sleeping, and as he got near her berth he saw a man wearing dark clothes. He said he heard later the man was a chief petty officer. This man,

## Finger Nail Examination in Train Case



This picture was taken in the Southern Pacific station Saturday afternoon when Dr. George H. Adler, coroner, took material from under the finger nails of several passengers and train employees in the James murder case. The man at center, looking at camera, is John Funches, 30, waiter, who was detained as a material witness. At right is State Officer Thomas. Other men in the picture were questioned but not detained.

## Here Is the Death Car



This picture shows the tourist sleeper in which Martha Brinson James was slain on the southbound West Coast. Picture taken in the station here. Location of her berth is indicated by the dark circle. Group at left is made up of passengers and trainmen discussing the case.

he said, was climbing out of Mrs. James' berth.

Before going back to the dining car, Folkes said, he was in the front of the train and had talked to a porter for 15 minutes.

This story, the officers said, conflicts in some details, with information of other witnesses.

State Police Sergeant Earl Tichenor said here that Folkes made no such statement as this while being questioned here.

Officer Tichenor said that Chief Water Tender R. M. Kelso was in the death car, and was in the death car talking to the porter at the time Mrs. James was killed, according to information gathered by the police.

Kelso had gone to get the porter help him with a zipper on his traveling bag, Kelso told officers he saw a man with a cook's cap stop at the front end of the death car, and then go through the car toward the

diner, some time before the murder occurred.

Could Have Jumped. Private Wilson said the scream awakened him.

"I looked down and saw half a man getting out of the lower berth," he said to a reporter at the Southern Pacific station here. "I could have jumped on him if the curtains had not been buttoned."

Wilson said he quickly pulled on shoes and pants and slid out of the berth to the aisle. He did not at first know Mrs. James had been wounded, but when he saw blood gushing from a large wound in her neck he yelled for the porter.

Wilson said he saw the dark man in pin-stripe running from the car toward the rear. Wilson had blood on his hand, he said, after propping up Mrs. James with the pillow.

Towel Found. Police looking over the train

here Saturday afternoon found blood specks through the cars behind the death car to the rear of the train. These were on both sides. There was some question as to whether Wilson might have left them while running through the train, or whether they could have been left by another man.

A bloody towel was found in a washroom in one of the rear cars.

Train authorities notified officers ahead and Mrs. James' body was removed from the West

Coast at Eugene early Saturday morning. Lane county officers got aboard there.

Train Held Here. The train came into Klamath Falls about 3 p. m. Saturday. Waiting it were state police, sheriff's officers, city police, District Attorney L. Orth Sisemore, and S. P. investigators.

The train was held here for nearly five hours while witnesses were questioned in the front end (dead-head) dining car.

Numerous statements were taken. Several negroes, including Funches and Folkes, were taken into the passenger station where Dr. George H. Adler, coroner, removed material from under their finger nails.

Investigation Continued. The train finally was released, Folkes going south, but Funches and Wilson being held here as material witnesses.

Police continued to work on the case here through the evening and all day Sunday. They followed several leads which brought no developments, one of them taking officers to Chemult to check a report a suspect had gotten off the West Coast there.

Funches said his home is at Oakland, Calif. He wore a brown suit, but not of the pin-stripe variety.

Folkes, when brought into the station for the finger-nail scraping by Deputy Sheriff Jack Franey, indicated great hurry. He wanted to get back to his kitchen, he said. He is of medium height and has a small moustache.

Officers Here. The death car was set off on a siding here and locked up before the train went south. It was returned to Albany, Linn county seat.

Herbert Shelton, Linn county sheriff, and his deputy, Clay Kirk, came here Monday morning and went north with the marine and Funches at noon. Sheriff Shelton said there were no new developments in the case in Lane county.

There were reports that a door had been found open on the train. Head brakeman Chester Anders of Portland, formerly of Klamath Falls, said that one of the doors was sprung. Anders said he saw a negro in a pin-stripe suit on the train north of Salem, but had not been able to find him after the killing.

Not Ravaged. State police here said there was nothing to a report that tracks in snow at Tangent showed a man had gotten off one train and taken another there.

At Eugene, Dr. Joseph Beaman, state police investigator, examined the body of Mrs. James and said she had not been ravaged. Robbery was not believed a motive of the crime for \$112 was found in Mrs. James' berth. Police considered the possibility a man made insulting approaches to Mrs. James, resulting in her comment that she couldn't stand any more of that, and then slew her when she started to cry out or reach for the porter's bell.

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