

Routine Investigation

(Continued from Page 7-A)

ed to Salem for identification. At 9:10 p.m. Milwaukee monitored a teletype message from Seattle to Olympia which said an AWOL soldier named Bernard J. Fitzpatrick was held on charges of stealing a car belonging to Ralph R. Lawson. It said foul play was a possibility.

On the next day the Criminal Identification and Investigation Bureau at Sacramento teletyped the identity of fingerprints taken from the body. They were those of a Ralph R. Lawson of Pasco, Washington. This message described scars on four fingers. They matched identically with those found on the body.

POLICE CALLED Lawson's wife in Pasco. She was certain the body could not be her husband—he had left home for the Veterans Ad-

ministration Hospital in Walla Walla, she said. Reluctantly, she said his name and Army serial number were engraved on his upper denture. The upper denture on the body revealed Lawson's name and an Army serial number.

Positive identification was made later by John Carlson of Pasco, Lawson's son-in-law. He said Lawson had been a bachelor until his marriage two years ago. He said Lawson had attempted to call his wife but the phone was constantly busy, so Lawson called Carlson to say he would be gone a few days. The call came January 30, but Lawson did not say where he was when he called.

District Attorney Arthur Beddoe and State Police Sgt. Bruce Lattin left Klamath Falls on the evening of Wednesday, February 3, to return Fitzpatrick to Klamath County. En route home, they hoped to

determine the exact site of Lawson's death; and the rather implausible reasons behind it.

They found Fitzpatrick most cooperative. He related this story: HE HAD LEFT Fort Ord January 26 without leave. He had been working in the company supply room, and took with him a bayonet on a canvas pistol belt, for protection. He had no money.

North of Sacramento, on January 30, he was hitchhiking when Lawson picked him up. Lawson drove all the way to Klamath Falls, where they arrived about 5:30 or 6 o'clock Sunday morning, January 31. They bought gas and oil at a Standard station at Second and Main. There Lawson inquired about a friend, a contractor, he thought lived in Klamath Falls. The attendant had heard the name, but did not know the man. Lawson did not attempt to visit him.

At the North Entrance Lawson

stopped the car and Fitzpatrick drove for the first time.

Fitzpatrick drove about 35 miles to the top of Spring Creek Hill. He had been smoking a cigarette, and when he attempted to stub it in the ash tray, he dropped it on the floor. He bent down to get it, and the car ran off the road into a snow-filled borrow pit. Neither he nor Lawson could drive the car out.

They were in the pit 45 minutes before a semi-truck driver pulled them out. A snow plow crew stopped by.

LAWSON WAS FURIOUS at Fitzpatrick for driving the car into the ditch. He said Fitzpatrick should have stopped when he got tired. Fitzpatrick said he wasn't tired, he just dropped a cigarette.

Lawson drove for another half hour, then decided to get some rest. He stopped the car just beyond the junction of State Route

58 and U.S. 97, about three miles south of Crescent.

He got into the back seat, drank a can of beer, and continually berated Fitzpatrick about his driving.

Fitzpatrick said Lawson glared at him and started to rise from his seat.

"And what did you do?" Beddoe asked.

"I stabbed him."

"What with?"

"The bayonet."

Fitzpatrick said he was kneeling on the front seat and leaned over to stab Lawson. The body crumpled to the floorboards, face up. Fitzpatrick took the keys from Lawson's left pants pocket, and drove on.

He stopped on a short, dark street in Bend and covered the body with clothing from the back seat and from the trunk. He found Lawson's wallet, containing \$12, in his shirt pocket, and a coin purse,

containing 85 cents, in a pants pocket.

At 12:30 Sunday night Fitzpatrick stopped at a gas station at Government Camp on Mt. Hood. The pumps were locked, but a woman came out and sold him \$4 worth of gas. Fitzpatrick asked her how much farther downhill the snow lasted. She said four or five miles.

Four miles downhill, Fitzpatrick saw the Camp Creek turnoff. He decided he had better not drive through Portland with the body, so he dragged it behind a small mound of snow-covered earth. He threw snow over the body.

He found blood on his pants and changed to a pair Lawson had left in the trunk.

HE DROVE through Portland, stopped to eat at Chehalis, and parked on a back street where he put clothes in the trunk, and the bayonet in the glove compartment.

He drove around town most of the night, thinking.

The next day, Monday, February 1, he visited a young friend in Ballard, near Seattle, and drove around with him most of that day. That night he, his friend, and a young married couple the friend knew were driving about when the patrolman spotted the dragging tail pipe.

Authorities said Fitzpatrick had been arrested several times for auto theft and car prowling. On August 27, 1958, he was sentenced to Washington State Training School for Boys after admitting two car thefts and providing six or seven other cars. He escaped September 6 and surrendered to police in Billings, Montana, his father's home, last April 1. He was returned to the training school and was paroled on September 3, 1959.

HE JOINED the Army in Billings and was sent to Fort Ord last October 19.

On the way back from Seattle, Fitzpatrick was most cooperative, Beddoe said. His memory was clear, and at several places where he said Lawson threw away beer cans, Beddoe and Lattin found cans of the uncommon brand Lawson was drinking.

Fitzpatrick was returned here last Saturday and was lodged in the city jail. His case formally was transferred to juvenile court Monday, and he was returned to city jail without bond.

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