

# BRUTAL MURDER ON SUNDAY NIGHT.

## Robbery and Whiskey the Cause of the Crime.

### SHERIFF DID GOOD WORK.

#### Discovered the Murdered Man-- Caused Murderer to be Arrested and Obtained Confession.

It was through the promptness and energy of Sheriff Crenshaw that a cold blooded, premeditated murder was unearthed on Tuesday morning. He was advised at midnight on Monday that John Peterson was missing that day and to trace could be found of him. Fred Hagglund and E. Larson were the individuals who got the sheriff up at that late hour and confided in him their suspicions that Peterson had met with foul play. The sheriff, after hearing their story, also came to the same conclusion, and if anything wrong had taken place Adolf N. Nordstrom was the man to locate and arrest without delay. It was discovered that Nordstrom had left town in a buggy with Drew Dawson about noon, who was taking him to Sheridan. Failing to get a telephone to Dawson, he deputized Henry Dawson to overtake his brother and his man and bring Nordstrom back dead or alive. Henry Dawson started off soon after midnight and at day break found his brother at Albert Mason's, where he and Nordstrom remained over night. Early Tuesday morning Sheriff Crenshaw got into telephone communication with Dawson, and when Nordstrom went out into the barn to resume his journey, the Dawson arrested and handcuffed him and started for the city. He made no resistance.

On Sunday John Peterson, Adolf Nordstrom, F. Hagglund and E. Larson were in the city, and having quit on the railroad, they had agreed to leave the county together, and while in the city they had been drinking. They all returned to the camp late Sunday afternoon, and in the evening Nordstrom again came to town. As Peterson could not be found on Monday Hagglund and Larson came to town that day to make inquiries and late at night notified the sheriff. Nordstrom knew that Peterson had money for they had all been paid off.

Soon after seven o'clock Tuesday morning Sheriff Crenshaw and others left for Kodal hill, where Peterson lived in a small house on the left hand side of the road, to ascertain if he could find any trace of the missing man. Others also engaged in the search and they had about given up the idea that Peterson had met with foul play, but the sheriff still continued to search. He got onto a log and he was surprised to see, not far distant, a man lying in a pool of water with his face down and the head covered with a coat and vest. To raise an alarm, the sheriff fired two shots, and this having failed he went up to the house and told what he had found. He made a careful examination of the house and the room where the murder had been committed and then traced where the body had been dragged to where he had found it. In the room the sheriff found several pieces of the butt of a revolver and some shells. The wall and window were spattered with blood, and he was convinced that a revolver had been used to kill Peterson. The sheriff then returned to town to await the arrival of Nordstrom. As soon as he reached the city the sheriff examined Nordstrom's things, which he had in a sack, and on the inside sleeves of the coat that Nordstrom wore on Sunday were found blood marks. The prisoner was taken to the scene of the tragedy, and as soon as he arrived outside of the house Sheriff Crenshaw took Nordstrom aside. Before doing so, he told the crowd that he was going to protect his prisoner, as there had been some talk of lynching him. For several minutes the sheriff talked to Nordstrom, telling him that he was convinced that he had committed the crime and advised him to own up. As the sheriff had failed to find the revolver which was instrumental in committing the gruesome crime the sheriff said that Nordstrom had agreed to show him where he had thrown the weapon. Frank Severance accompanied them. When they returned the sheriff made a statement that the prisoner would confess all.

Coroner Hawk had been notified in the morning and he was on hand with a jury to ascertain the cause of death. The prisoner was taken to the room where he had committed the crime. It was a small room at the back of the house with the window facing west, under which was a bunk. The walls and window were spattered with blood and it looked as though the dying man had made a struggle for his life. It was in this room that Nordstrom made a clean confession in answer to questions put to him by Sheriff Crenshaw. Coroner

#### The Confession.

He said his name was Adolf Nicholas Nordstrom. On Sunday night he got a saddle horse at Easter's barn in Tillamook City. It was his intention when he left the city to go to Bay City to see about the boat. When he reached Peterson's place at the Kodal hill, not far from the camp, he tied the horse in the shed and went into the house for the purpose of stealing some money. About \$2. The house was in darkness, and when he knew that Peterson was awake and heard him talking, Nordstrom went out and got on the horse and rode out and tied the animal in the brush to a small tree south of the house. Nordstrom went back to the house, and Peterson was then in the kitchen sitting and talking. Peterson told Nordstrom that someone had been in the house. He believed it was Hall because of the horse. Nordstrom said he had lost his hat, a black one, and the old man had picked it up. Peterson told Nordstrom all about someone having been there and leaving a horse outside. As the old man had picked up his hat, Nordstrom thought that he would tell on him and he would get into trouble, anyway, so he intended knocking him senseless, as it was the only way he could get out of it, as he knew the old man would get him. Peterson was sitting on the bunk in the corner. Nordstrom took his revolver from his pocket and knocked Peterson on the head with the butt of the weapon, and as he did so his head knocked against the wall, the wall being spattered with blood. He again knocked him on the head a couple of times, but it might have been more times than that and then dragged the body outside the house. Nordstrom identified several pieces of the butt of the revolver which he struck the old man with and which were found by the sheriff in the room where Peterson was murdered. Then he said he could not say as the pieces as they looked awfully worn. When asked whether the pieces belonged to the butt of the revolver he used to kill Peterson he admitted that they did.

He dragged the body down the hill and left it there. He dragged him through the woods, then down through the barbed wire fence and left him. He could not drag him any further because he was so heavy. Intended hiding the body. There was no water in the meadow when he dragged him there. He did not remember which way he lay in the water. He left him as he was and as he dragged him down the hill. His coat was in pieces as he dragged him with it. Peterson was not dead and was breathing when he dragged him out, and he struggled a little. He did not strike him again and he was breathing when he dragged him. When asked if he thought Peterson would die, Nordstrom replied "Yes, I thought he would die," and the reason he thought he would die was that Peterson was making a gurgling noise and his mouth was full of blood. He thought more of Peterson's money than his life. He had been drinking and knew that whiskey did not excuse him for the crime he had committed.

He went and got his horse and came up the hill, and as he did so he threw his revolver over the hill into the brush. The revolver was in his pants' pocket. He thought the revolver would be evidence against him so he did not want it and threw it away.

Asked whether he shot Peterson with the revolver, Nordstrom replied: "No, I did not shoot him with the revolver, I beat him to death. If I had fired a shot someone would have heard it." There were only four shells in the revolver, and he did not know what became of them. From the house he rode straight to the livery stable. No one was there. The door was half open. He put the horse in and let him go to a stall and he placed \$1 on the counter. Nordstrom then went to Stephens at the White Corner, and was there until after 12 o'clock. He went out of Stephens' place a couple of times to another cigar store and then went back. He had a couple of drinks at Stephens'. Then he took his swag away and took it along. He intended to take the boat at Bay City, but could not find anybody to take him in a launch. He then went to Charley Lundquist's, north of town, and put his swag there and slept in the barn Sunday night. He came to town Monday morning and went to Stephens', where he had a couple

of drinks. From there he went to Dawson's livery barn, and asked if there was a stage leaving for the railroad. He did not know what railroad. They told him that the stage to the railroad left at four o'clock. He went out and later returned, and asked them if they wanted to take him out. He was told that he could have a rig and was told it would be ready at 12 o'clock and the cost would be \$30. He told them to be ready at 12 o'clock and Nordstrom went to the barn at 12:15 p.m. They were not ready with the rig and he waited a quarter of an hour for them. He was driven down to Charley Lundquist's and went into the barn and took his swag. Then they drove right ahead.

He was asked whether that was the first crime he had committed and he answered that it was. He was asked what time the murder was committed. He thought it was somewhere between nine and eleven o'clock, and no one else was about the shanty. He admitted that "John Peterson" was the name of the man he had killed. He also admitted that he took about \$200 from Peterson. He spent some money in town, about \$35, the suit of clothes cost \$25.50. He spent some money the night before. He thought he spent about \$50 all told. He knew the old man had money before he went there. When asked if Peterson made any resistance, Nordstrom answered, "Yes; he tried to fight me. I did not hit him very hard the first time." When asked again whether he struck Peterson when on the outside of the house, Nordstrom said, "Yes; I think I did with the revolver." He did not think there was much water where he dragged the body. Nordstrom had been wearing logger's boots for several days. He had on other clothes on Sunday and had his other coat on when he killed him, and he admitted also that blood might have got on his clothes when he touched him, and no one was around the place. After Peterson had found his hat Nordstrom thought he would testify against him, for he knew that he had tried to rob him and had seen the horse. He did not intend to take all of his money at first, and did not intend to get it all. Peterson had accused him or someone of trying to rob him. When Peterson woke up Nordstrom went out of the house. When he saw that Peterson had lit a lamp he jumped on his horse and took the animal in the brush and tied him up. He took the money from Peterson after he dragged the body outside at the back of the house, near the shed. He was not dead then, and it was at this place where he hit him the last time.

Sheriff Crenshaw then took the prisoner to where the body was found, and on his way down Nordstrom pointed out the spot where he threw the revolver. It was dark at the time. He dragged the body under a barbed wire fence. There was not as much water there as there was then, and when further interrogated, said "Yes; I dragged him down the hill and over the grass and this is where I left him." He did not remember whether he put a coat over Peterson's head, as it was dark at the time. He pulled and dragged him by the coat and the coat was torn to pieces. He intended to hide the body, but could not drag him any further because he was so heavy. Asked whether that was the man he murdered he said, "Yes; that is the man. That is his boots. I know them." Peterson had been sleeping in his clothes.

The body of Peterson was found in the meadow and in a pool of water. There were no blood marks in the trail, which goes to prove that he had not lost much blood. The face was partly covered with water, and if there was any life in the body when it was dragged there, drowning must have completed the work. A coat and vest covered the head, the face being downward. As the body was taken from the water and turned over the face presented a most horrible appearance, the head a face being covered with blood from the wounds. Peterson's watch had stopped at 11:15.

The prisoner showed some signs of nervousness and his face flushed as he stood before the body of the man he murdered, and W. E. Catterlin and Will Harris having found the revolver, the prisoner identified it. There were blood and hair on the weapon.

The body of Peterson was brought to the front of the house and as Nordstrom stood and gazed on the bloody and mangled countenance of the man he had brutally and cowardly murdered seemed have impressed him with the enormity of the crime. His face flushed again when someone remarked that he had done a good job, to which he replied, "I was pretty well loaded up when I was at the livery stable." He told Sheriff Crenshaw that he could get whiskey anywhere in Tillamook, and "I got it right in Easter's barn," and he said he then realized what whiskey had brought him to. Dr. Boals asked him from whom he bought the whiskey, to which he replied, "From a fellow who used to go around with it—a stout fellow, smooth shaven. I would know him again if I saw him."

When Sheriff Crenshaw returned to the city with the murderer, instead of taking him to jail he took the prisoner first to the White Corner and then to Easter's barn. Nordstrom pointed out Langworthy, the man who has figured in several bootleg cases and the person who had two barrels of beer delivered at the back of the Olsen building the night be

fore the fire, as the fellow who had sold him the whiskey which was, indirectly, one of the causes which led him to commit the brutal murder. Sheriff Crenshaw immediately placed Langworthy under arrest and yanked him off to the court house with the murderer.

#### The Inquest.

Coroner W. C. Hawk held an inquest on the remains of the deceased, the jurymen being C. A. Elliott, C. W. Pike, N. C. Hansen, J. C. Bewley, A. G. Wright and D. G. Goodspeed. After hearing Nordstrom narrate the particulars of the murder in his confession in the cabin the jury was brought to the city to complete the taking of evidence.

E. Larson was acquainted with Peterson about 18 months and the last he saw of him was about five o'clock on Sunday evening in his cabin. He was not full, but had been drinking. Knew Peterson had about \$250. He had known Nordstrom since last August and the last he saw of him was about eleven o'clock on Monday morning. He did not tell him where he was going. He missed Peterson Monday morning.

Fred Hagglund saw the deceased last on Sunday afternoon and he showed him \$200 in the cabin, and as nothing could be found of Peterson on Monday morning he thought that something was wrong. Nordstrom knew that Peterson had money.

E. E. Dawson testified to taking Nordstrom out and substantiated what the prisoner had said in his confession regarding that. He made the arrest from instructions from Sheriff Crenshaw, and after doing so he searched him and took a roll of green backs from him, also a purse with a \$20 piece, two \$5 pieces and other change. Nordstrom had two sacks of clothes and two guns, and he bought a valise at Mason's store that morning. Sheriff Crenshaw testified that he did not know either parties. Hagglund and Larson came to his house about eleven o'clock on Monday night and informed him that they had a little business they wanted to tell him about. They were in town Sunday with Peterson and Nordstrom, and returned to camp that afternoon together. They were going to leave the county together, and as Peterson could not be found on Monday they thought something had happened him. The sheriff then explained how he dispatched Henry Dawson at midnight to overtake and arrest Nordstrom and to bring him back dead or alive. He described finding the body of Peterson, and recited to the jury what he did which caused Nordstrom to make a confession. He told him whatever he said would be used against him, and Nordstrom said he knew that.

Dr. R. T. Boals having testified as to the cause of death was by a fractured skull, the jury brought in a verdict that John Peterson came to his death by being struck over the head with a blunt instrument in the hands of Nordstrom.

Peterson has a brother working for the Astoria railroad and was about 55 years of age. He was a Mason and Odd-fellow and was a native of Sweden.

Nordstrom is a native of the same country and 25 years of age. He is well built and from the tattoo marks on his hands it is thought he must have been a sailor. It is thought also that he had committed crime before he came to Tillamook. He realizes there is no hope for him. He will be tried at the April term of the Circuit Court.

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