

ORA ROBEY MURDER AND GRILL SUICIDE

Youth Crazed by Jealousy, Murders Sweetheart and Commits Suicide by Shooting at Midnight—Only One Witness Near the Scene—Had Evidently Carefully Prepared for Deed and Wrote Letter to Mother Explaining Why He Had Decided Upon Crime—Bullets Pierced Hearts of Both—Girl Refused to Marry on Less Than Year's Courtship—Had Threatened Her.

The Marshfield Times of April 16 has a detailed story of the murder and suicide of Ora Robey and John Grills, both well known at Salem:

Grill Had Plot.
Carrying out a carefully laid plot that his mind, crazed by love and jealousy had conceived and arranged for ending his troubles, John Grills last night, about midnight, shot and killed Ora Robey and then committed suicide on South Sheridan street as they were enroute home. Four shots were fired from a .38 calibre revolver, two missing entirely and the other two piercing the heart of each and producing almost instant death.

The tragedy, which occurred about 300 yards north of the race track stables, was witnessed by one, Dan Starr, a horse trainer, who was returning to the stables from the city and was within about 200 yards of the couple when the shots were fired. Owing to the darkness, he could not distinguish who it was but hastened, passed the bodies to the stables to get aid.

The last spark of life was gone, when he and M. H. Nay and others returned, Grills lying on the sidewalk and the girl just off the walk in the mud.

A Struggle Took Place.
The tragedy had not been without a struggle. The box of candy, the book and the shawl scattered along the walk and the feeing footsteps that residents of the neighborhood heard told plainly of the girl's efforts to save herself. The powder burns on the clothing and skin showed that Grills had followed her and placed the muzzle of the gun within a few inches of her body before he pulled the trigger. The bullet passed through the heart and body, imbedding itself just beneath the skin on her breast. She plunged forward, off the walk into the street where she was found, her only appeal being a few screams evidently uttered before the fatal bullet had been fired.

Scarcely 20 seconds after he had killed the girl, according to the evidence of neighbors who heard "the noise of the tragedy, Grills placed the muzzle of the revolver to his breast and fired, the bullet passing through his heart and imbedding itself just beneath the skin below his left shoulder.

Grills' plans for ending it all were revealed this morning when the letter, printed in this story, was found in his pocket. Written in a pencil, evidently with a nervous hand, he told of the ravings of a crazed mind. In addition to the letter was a note on a picture postal card, containing practically the same data as given in the letter.

Met Down Town.
Grills met Miss Robey down town last evening. Just where and how, no one appears to know. About 11:30, they stopped at Jack Davis' where he bought a box of candy. She waited at the door but he in-

stated that she come in and drink some soda. She complied. While she was drinking, he excused himself and went into the back room where he bade good bye to Cecil Holland, Jack Davis, Julius Egenoff and some other boys there. While he didn't give them any reason for bidding them goodbye, the inference they had that he was going away, probably to Portland, as he had been talking of the trip. Then they left the place together and proceeded homeward, that being the last seen of them alive. About 15 minutes later, the tragedy occurred.

Well Known Here.
Grills was a foundryman and had been following that vocation. He is a step-son of the late Dr. Murphy and lived with his mother, Mrs. Murphy, his sisters, Mrs. Wm. Wade and Mary Grills. He was born at Roseburg and came here from Salem. His father is a contractor at Roseburg and Salem now. Two other sisters, one at Salem and one at Gardiner, also survive him.

Ora Robey is the daughter of S. C. Roby who resides near the fair ground. She would have been 23 years old August 30, next. The family moved from Salem to North Bend last September and a few months later moved to Marshfield. She had resided at home and yesterday started to work in the Billy Taylor candy store. She is survived by her parents, a twin brother, Orley, and two other younger brothers, Arton and Alonzo.

The Roby home is in South Marshfield being a white house just across the street from the race track.

Grills had recently been working at the Nelson Iron Works of which his brother-in-law, Wm. Wade, is an officer.

While the definite arrangements have not been made for the funerals, Grills' will probably be held Sunday. The body of Miss Robey will be sent to the old home in Salem for interment.

Had Threatened Her.
There had been wranglings of the tragedy but no one had taken the threats of Grills seriously. The night or the second night previous to the crime, Grills, according to the story told by Miss Robey to her folks, had placed a revolver against her breast, "I would end it all now if it wasn't for your mamma and mine." It occurred at Miss Robey's home, after all had gone to bed.

Miss Robey was frightened and told her family. Her mother suggested that Grills be put under bonds to keep the peace or other precautions taken. Mr. Roby thought to send her away but couldn't do so and the matter was let drag. Miss Robey was nervous until a short time afterwards, Grills told her that he was going to Portland in a day or two.

Previous to this, he had told her that he would see that she wouldn't walk down town with anyone besides himself or write to any other fel-

lows, intimating that he would take strenuous steps to prevent. This threat resulted in Miss Robey's twin brother, Orley Roby, calling on Grills and asking him what he meant and telling him if he couldn't be better to stop calling on her. Grills said that he didn't mean anything but had merely been angry on account of the tenor of a note that she had written him. In addition to this, Miss Robey asked him what he had meant by his threats and he said that he shouldn't be taken seriously.

Wanted to Marry Her.
According to the evidence given by the dead girl's twin brother at the inquest this morning, Grills had asked Miss Robey to be his wife although he had known her but two months. According to what his sister had told him, she told Grills that she wasn't going to get married now and wouldn't marry anyone unless she knew them for at least a year. Grills kept insisting but was put off and he is said to have grown insanely jealous, thinking she intended to marry someone else.

Miss Robey's father said that he didn't want to discuss Grills' actions with Grills as he might get angry, and say more than he should, so he sent Orley Roby, the twin brother, to Grills as previously stated.

Mother Had Premonition.
Mrs. Roby, the dead girl's mother, heard the fatal shots and immediately surmised the truth. She had been asleep but awakened her husband. They got up, found their daughter was not home but seeing that their son, Orton, with whom she had gone down to the skating rink, was not returned to bed. The mother remained awake, however, and when 5 o'clock came, she insisted on Mr. Roby and Orley arising and starting a search for Ora. They started down town and when passing Mrs. Murphy's home, where Grills made his home, Orley stopped to inquire about Grills. There, they learned the truth.

Left With Brother.
Last evening, about 7:30, Miss Roby and her brother, Orton, aged 20, started down town together. Just before leaving she went over to her cousin, Moses M. Bullock, who makes his home with the family and said "Good-bye, Uncle Bill," and stepping over to her mother, kissed her and said, "Good night."

Soon afterwards, she was seen at the skating rink, skating with Dan Starr who was the only near witness of the tragedy. Just how and where she met Grills could not be ascertained, Orton having left her and spent the night down town with friends.

Grills Had Been Drinking.
Cecil Holland, who had known Grills since the latter's coming to Coos Bay, testified that he saw Grills around the skating rink early in the evening. Grills, he said, had been drinking but was far from intoxicated. Grills also was displaying the revolver and twirling it around his finger but Holland didn't think much of the latter fact as he had frequently seen Grills with a gun. Grills, he said, appeared to be in his usual mood. Grills had recently told Holland that someone in Marshfield had threatened to shoot him (Grills) on sight and he proposed to be prepared for them.

Later, Holland saw Grills with the girl when they stopped at Jack Davis' store.

Starr Saw Shooting.
Dan Starr, a horse trainer who sleeps at the fair grounds, testified at the coroner's inquest that he was within about 200 yards of the couple when the shooting took place. He said that he was en route home and while going down Sheridan street heard a shot fired. It appeared to be ahead of him. Soon after the shot, he heard a scuffle and a girl's screams for help. He hastened ahead, then heard two shots in rapid succession and after an interval of several seconds a fourth shot. Owing to the darkness, he couldn't make out much but was merely able to see the flash of the last shot. He hurried on, noticed a body on the sidewalk and made straight for the stables where he awakened M. H. Nay and returned to investigate and give the alarm. After seeing that the two were dead, they came down town for the officers.

Previous to the shooting, he testified that he had skated with Miss Roby at the rink. He didn't remember of having held any conversation with her, other than that she had introduced him to her brother, Orton Roby. That was about 9 o'clock and he didn't notice her afterwards.

Coroner's Inquest.
Dr. E. Mingus, the Coos county coroner, impaneled a jury consisting of Charles A. Howard, H. J. Lenden, Ed. R. Colgan, Chas. W. McCulloch, L. W. Traver and Geo. Thomson.

All testified substantially to the facts above set forth. Wall, Frizzen and LaChapelle live on Broadway, a block from the scene of the tragedy, and Nay at the race track, and were among the first on the ground. Wall telephoned to Marshall Carter and accompanied the officer to the scene about 20 minutes after the last shot was fired.

Dr. E. Mingus was also called and the bodies removed to T. J. Lewis' morgue.

The inquest was also held at Mr. Lewis' parlors and attracted a great crowd.

Coroner's Verdict.
After completing the investigation, the coroner's jury returned two verdicts. The first, in the case of the girl, finding that she had come to her death from a wound inflicted by John Grills, the crime being committed through jealousy. In the case of the man, they found he had come to his death at his own hands, the wound being inflicted with suicidal intent.

Grills' Letter to His Mother.
The following letter was found in Grills' pocket, it being enclosed in a sealed envelope which was addressed, "Mother from John":
"Well, mamma, I had to do it.

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Yes, I told her I would do it and I meant it. You mustn't take it too hard for I couldn't help it. She just drove me to it. She will not bother anybody else. There isn't much to do in town. I know I have been a bad boy but it is all over now. She has received her reward. I could not live and see anybody else have her. I know I am crazy but I cannot help it. I never was any good and I would be worse in the future. Give my love to all the girls and tell them why I done it. She promised me, then she tried to shake me but she couldn't. If I can't have her nobody else will do.

"Tell Bill to get that bill from Fred and add \$6 to it for Cecil Holland. But find out what he wants first and then add \$1 for the Pioneer Hardware store. Pay bearer 75 cents for hauling the boat. Then add what he thinks it is worth and give to to dock.

"Goodby,
"JOHN."

Portland Market.

Wheat—Club, 84c; valley, 80@85c; bluestem, 87c.
Poultry — Hens, 14@14 1/2 c; ducks, 15@16c; pigeons, old, \$1 per dozen.
Millstuff—Bran, \$24.
Hay—Timothy, valley, \$7.50; alfalfa, \$12@12.50.
Vetch—\$14.

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Eggs—14c.
Butter—Creamery, 27 1/2 c.
Cows—\$3@3.50.
Hens—11c; mixed chickens, 10c.
Local wheat—\$2@85c.
Cats—85c.
Barley—\$26.
Flour—Hard wheat, \$4.50@4.80; valley, \$4.00.
Hay—Cheat, \$13@14; clover, \$10@12 per ton; timothy, \$14@15.
Onions—3 1/2 c.
Hops—1907 crop, 4@4 1/2 c.
Casara Bark—3 to 3 1/2 c.
Mhair—20c.

Retail Market.

Oats—\$1.45@1.50 per cwt.
Wheat—\$1.00.
Rolled barley—\$31.
Eggs—16c.
Butter—Country, 30c; creamery, 30c.
Flour—Valley, \$1.20 per sack; hard wheat, \$1.40@1.50.
Bran—90c per sack; \$30.00 per ton; shorts, \$1.25 per sack.
Hay—Cheat, \$16@17; clover, \$15; cheat, 85c; clover, 75c per cwt.
Oranges—\$2.50@2.50.

Livestock.

Hogs—Fat, \$5.50.
Stock hogs—\$4.50.
Steers—Tops, \$3.50; fair, \$2.75@3.00.
Veal—6@8c.

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All the great insurance companies have contradicted the theory that have been given currency through prohibition souring the drinking of beer was a bar to securing insurance, a lately published to the world at large the statement that drinking beer moderately (not more than two quarts during twenty-four hours) were the very best of risks. The latest British insurance reports show that the ratio of death rate among abstemious ers is thirty per cent greater than among moderate drinkers.

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