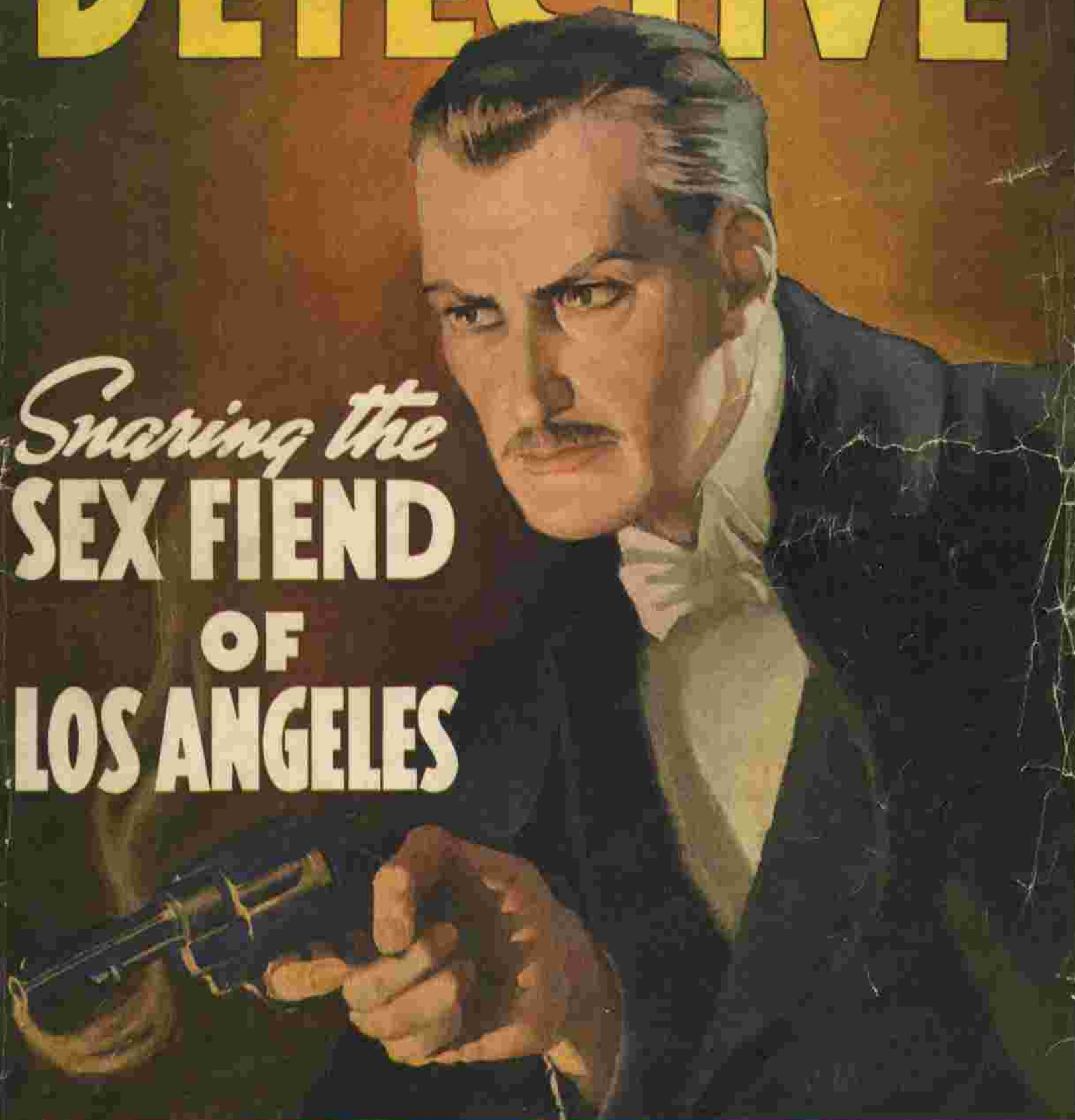


MASTER
★ DETECTIVE

APRIL

15¢
KALCADDEN
PUBLICATION

Snaring the
SEX FIEND
OF
LOS ANGELES



DARK SHADOW OF THE UNDERWORLD

MASTER DETECTIVE

A MACFADDEN PUBLICATION ★ VOL. ★ 14 ★ NO. ★ 2

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COVER BY J. W. LITTLE



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RED RIDDLE at

By

AL BRIDWELL

Former Sheriff

Scioto County, Ohio

As told to FRANK H. WARD



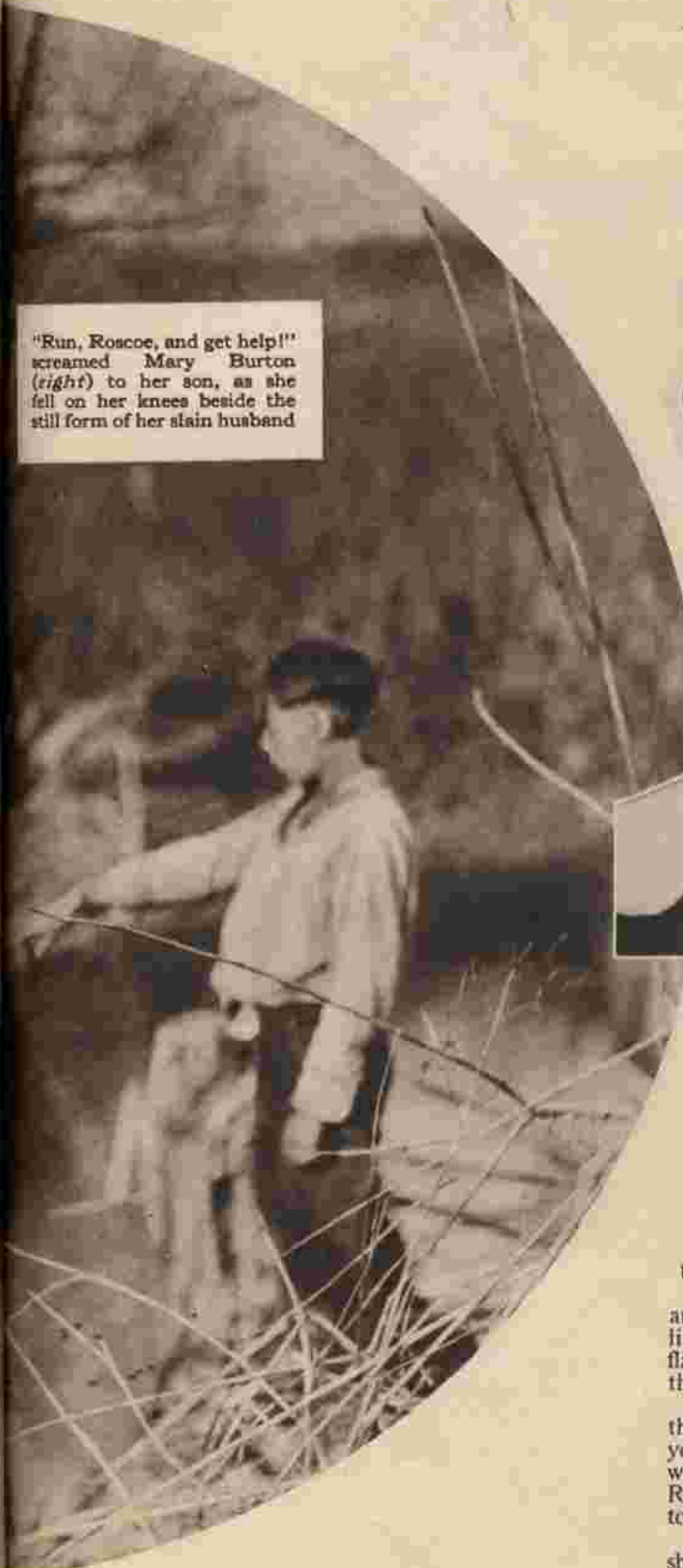
(Above) Carrie Burton. She was of assistance to the officers in suggesting a possible motive for the crime at Blue Goose



(Below) John Scott points to the spot in Millar's Run where he found the rusty double-barreled shotgun; discovery which broke the case

An OHIO

BLUE GOOSE



"Run, Roscoe, and get help!" screamed Mary Burton (right) to her son, as she fell on her knees beside the still form of her slain husband



THE October night was intensely still after the rain. A languid wind stirred and rustled fitfully among the few leaves remaining on the tree that stood, sentinel-like, on the west side of the Blue Goose Tavern in Lucasville, Ohio.

A man drew close to the protecting tree trunk. He stood there in an attitude of watchful hostility, his face dark with malevolence. His glance was directed at Bill Burton, whose head and shoulders were visible through the nearest window.

The feeble light from an oil lamp within the room was augmented for a second by the flare of a match as Burton lit his pipe. While Burton puffed contentedly, the watcher flattened himself against the building and sidled toward the window.

Eyes, narrowed to steely points, surveyed the interior of the kitchen. Only Burton; his wife, Mary, and their two youngest children, Roscoe, thirteen, and Walter, eleven, were in the room. Walter was on his mother's lap, asleep. Roscoe was on a stool at their side. The back of Bill Burton's head was six inches from the window.

The watcher lifted a shotgun on a right angle to his shoulder. Vicious eyes gleamed down the barrel, which was levelled at Burton's head. The man who clasped the trigger was breathing through lips that were drawn back stiffly.

As the barrel of the gun pressed against the glass a look of terror suddenly came into Mary Burton's eyes. She was

Enigma

staring beyond her husband into the darkness. The woman appeared paralyzed with fear and, if she tried to scream, alarm stilled her voice.

C-r-a-c-k!

A volley roared out, annihilating the silence. The terrific charge rocked the kitchen, shattering the window pane into a thousand pieces. Bill Burton was the only person within the trajectory of the shot. The pointblank volley struck Burton on the left side of the head, spun him about, pitched him to the floor. Some of the buckshot rattled and ricocheted about the room.

Pandemonium swept the small room. The world seemed to recede from Mary Burton and leave her sitting in vacancy. Little Walter awoke to a world of acrid smell, curling smoke and burning gunpowder. For a second the mother and children watched the smoke eddying upwards, numb with the horror of it.

Then, with startling suddenness, the voices of the wife and sons echoed through the room. Mary Burton rushed to the side of her slain husband, and fell on her knees, her lips moving in silent prayer.

"Run, Roscoe, and get help!" Mrs. Burton screamed to her oldest boy. He scurried into the night like a frightened rabbit, toward the home of his married brother, Charles Burton. The latter brought Constable W. R. Jacobs on the run.

It was a little after eight o'clock that night of October 27th, 1932, when I received the news from Constable Jacobs at Portsmouth, our county seat. I set out immediately with two of my deputies, E. E. Ridge and Irvin Ross, and Coroner Vernon E. Fowler. Fowler, a photographer by profession, packed along a camera and flashlight bulbs.

A bulldog, chained to a staple driven into the east side of the Blue Goose, barked dismally as we approached. It occurred to me then that if the dog had been kept on the west side our trip that night might have been unnecessary.

WE found the left side of Burton's face almost blown away. Most of the buckshot was still in the murdered man's head, just above the ear. The slayer had been so close to Burton when he fired that some of the shot went clear through the victim's head, emerging on the other side.

Constable Jacobs, in response to my telephonic suggestion, had kept the room just as it was when Burton fell. After Coroner Fowler had taken a couple of flashlight pictures, we picked all the shot from the body of the victim, and from the walls, for the purpose of weighing it to determine the gauge of the lethal weapon.

"This is No. 6 shot, Al," announced Fowler, who has acquired quite a reputation as a criminologist in our section. "Its combined weight indicates that a 12-gauge shotgun was used."

We drove the county car up to the west side of the building and played its headlights on the spot where the murderer had stood. Constable Jacobs had had the foresight to place pots and pans over deep footprints in the wet and soggy ground to protect them. There seemed to be two distinct sets of tracks leading from the broken window to Millar's Run in the rear. One set had been made by a heavy man who walked pigeon-toed. The other prints were those of a smaller and lighter man. We could not put much credence in this evidence, as we didn't know when the tracks had been made, but they did emphasize how easy it would



In the darkness the barrel of a gun pressed against the window pane, a volley roared, and William Burton (left) fell to the ground, the victim of a phantom marksman



be for the killer to escape through the bottom lands.

We discussed the setting of the murder as we spun along the ten-mile stretch of State Route No. 23. In the old days when the two-story frame store-building the Burtons occupied was resplendent with shiny white and a trim of Alice blue, we called it the Blue Goose.

But time had wrought devastating changes. The Blue Goose, standing on stilts a foot high as protection against the turbulent habits of Millar's Run, in the rear, now looked like a stranded Noah's Ark. The unused storeroom was vacant, cobwebby and dirty. There was nothing in it but a long bar and footrail.

Sleeping quarters on the second floor gave evidence of teeming occupancy as the headlights of our car threw into relief the pillows and sheets from unmade beds, projecting through open windows for their daily airing.

The main highway and quiet lanes of Lucasville were dotted with little knots of curious, excited residents, their words aflame with the night's story. Already the able-bodied men of the village were threshing through the fields and woods, their heads bent forward, their arms tense, seeking for a trail, a clue, to the vanished assassin.

But Bill Burton was well liked in Lucasville. His neighbors knew him as a mild-mannered man whose greatest fault was a taste for moonshine whiskey that he sometimes

manufactured when work was slack at the sawmill and there was no butchering to do. That day Bill and his brother, Joe, who lived with him, had been butchering for a farmer on the other side of the village.

Joe Burton was cursing his luck because he hadn't been home when his brother was killed. He and Bill, being just a year apart in age, had always played and worked together, he told us, Joe, the older, was forty-five.

"We had been butchering up at the J. H. Brant place, all day, Bill and I," explained Joe Burton. "It was after dark when we got home. Supper was on the table, and we all pitched in. Then the kids cracked walnuts while Mary and Bill and I talked."

The conversation, Joe said, was about the battle between Franklin D. Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover for the presidency, and also about Carrie Burton, who had just written that she was coming home from Columbus in a day or two for a long visit with her brothers and parents.

"Mary and Bill were just remarking how happy they would be to have their daughter home when I remembered we had promised to return the butchering knife that night to George Jacobs," continued Joe. "I wanted to stretch my legs a bit, so I started down the road. I heard the shot just as I reached the Jacobs' place, and came rushing back with George and Louis Green, who was visiting George."

MARY BURTON remembered that the last thing on her husband's mind was his dog.

"He was just remarking that Brant had asked him if it was true that he had a blue-eyed bulldog, when that shot came," sobbed the widow. "He was smiling about it when he fell toward us. It was lucky the stove was between us and the window, or we would have got it, too."

Neither Joe Burton, Mary Burton, nor her grown son, Charles, could offer any explanation of the murder. Knowing that men don't go about haphazardly shooting through windows, we pressed the relatives for some lead that would disclose a motive. Finally one of them remarked that Fred Harrison, an itinerant relative, had forced himself on the Burtons Wednesday night, after spending Tuesday night in the Salvation Army flophouse in Portsmouth.

"Bill ordered Fred out when we came home for lunch, Thursday," commented Mary Burton. "Bill explained that we couldn't afford to keep him, as work was slack and food prices going up."

"If you don't keep me, you won't keep anybody," Harrison snarled as he departed, according to Mary Burton.

We didn't consider this lead so important until several townfolk told us they had seen a man resembling Harrison in build, running down the road immediately after the shot.

Then I sent my deputies to Nauvoo, a town ten miles away, where Harrison's sister, Mrs. John Bosworth, resided.

Arriving at 11 P. M., my men found Harrison in bed in the Bosworth home. Harrison declined to get up and be questioned, so he was taken out of bed and persuaded to dress.

Harrison's story was that he had come to Portsmouth from Michigan, two days before the murder, taking up his residence at the Salvation Army headquarters Tuesday night. On Wednesday he went to the Blue Goose and spent the night there. Harrison denied quarreling with Bill Burton, said he appreciated that Bill couldn't afford to keep him, and vehemently denied

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(Above) The Blue Goose, scene of the scarlet crime. Arrow points to window through which the mysterious murderer fired

Asleep on his mother's knee, Walter Burton (right) received a rude awakening as the blast of gunfire shattered the silence and brought red death into his home



Master Detective

(Left) Deputy Arthur Oakes, now Sheriff, examines the rusty shotgun which had been sought for so long and which pinned the crime on the guilty. (Below) In foreground is the George Jacobs place, to which the victim's brother Joe was bound when he heard the shot at the Blue Goose (marked by arrow)



staple in the west side of the building, under the false window, similar to that in which the bulldog was tied on the opposite side of the structure. Shreds of hair from the blue-eyed bulldog rope clung to the staple and to the clapboards of the house.

When neighbors told us that the dog was usually tied on that side, we inquired when it had been moved. Mary Burton was authorized for the statement that the animal had been moved Thursday on her husband's orders, because the rain had been coming from the west and flooding the ground under the house at the side

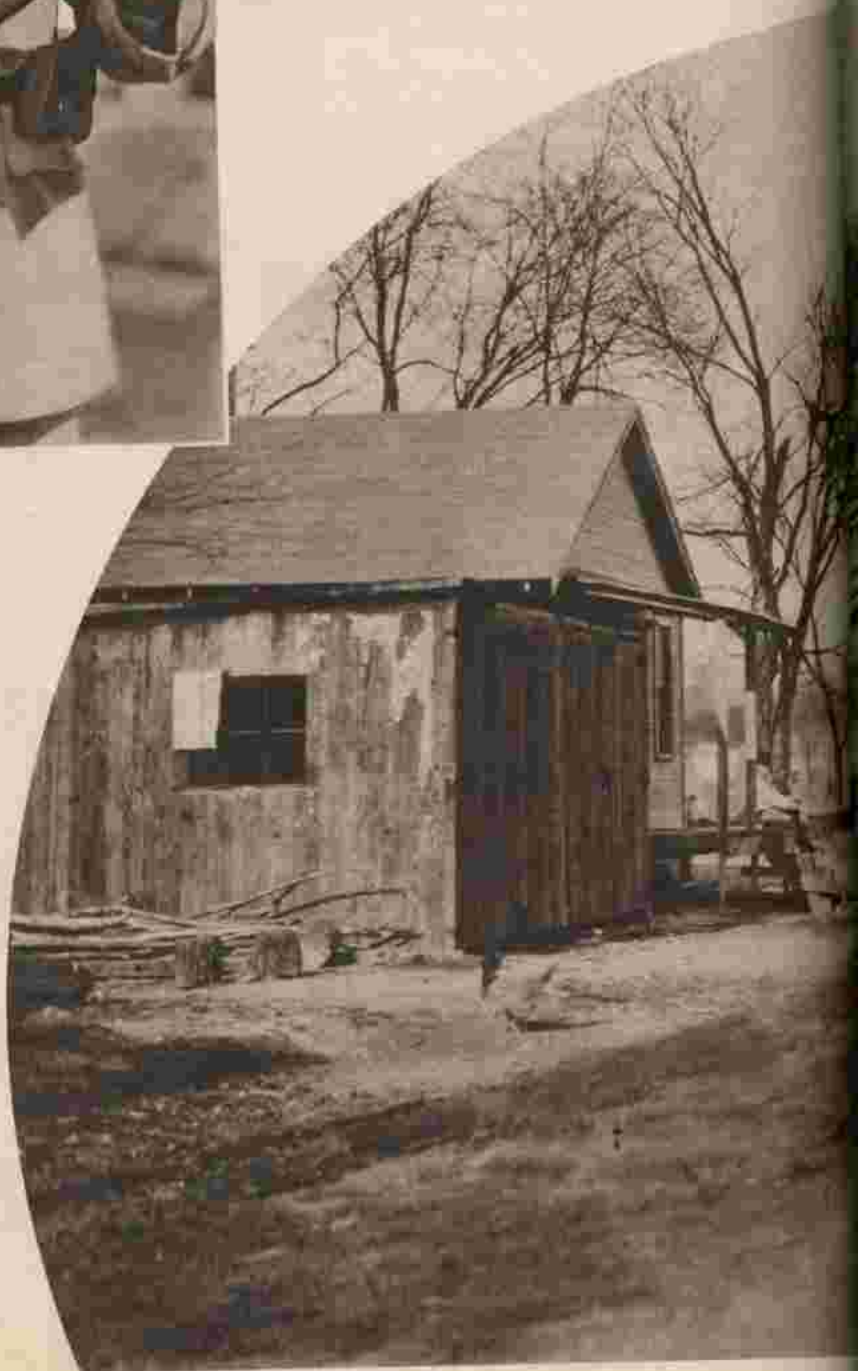
making the threat attributed to him by Mrs. Burton.

Upon leaving the Blue Goose, Harrison continued, he walked part way to the Bosworth place and thumbed a ride the balance of the distance. He chopped wood all afternoon, and that was why he retired so early, as he was tired.

THE most damaging evidence against Harrison was given by Erceel Lyons. Lyons told us he met Harrison near the Blue Goose soon after the shooting and, when Harrison inquired what the excitement was about and was informed someone was shot, Harrison remarked, "That's too bad," and kept right on walking, without inquiring further. Lyons said Harrison had something in his right hand, concealed under his overcoat.

We lodged Harrison in jail, and early Friday morning we began a search of the bottom lands. We suspected that the lethal weapon was in the creek, as a set of footprints had described an arc from the broken window to Millar's Run, thence back on to the road. The creek was running high, and our search was unsuccessful.

In our investigation, we found a



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the dog usually took refuge from
shelter.

It seemed a queer quirk of fate that
Burton's thoughtfulness for his dog
had removed a safeguard which undoubt-
edly would have prevented his murder.

It seemed as though there was a fairly
circumstantial case against Harrison.
In the first place his shoes were of an un-
usually large size, and could have made
large footprints under the window.
In the second place they were very muddy that night
when he was arrested.

WALTER BURTON and Jack Wright,
Burton's father, a son of Frank Wright, who
lived in the vicinity, told us
that he kept with Harrison one
night and that their bare feet
touched something near the
head of the bed that felt like a
warm.

(Right) Sheriff Al
Bridwell, former New
York Giant short-
stop, who tells the
story of the horror
at Blue Goose and
the plot that lay
behind it



As to motive, besides Mary Bur-
ton's story of the threat when he
was ordered to leave, we learned
that Harrison and Joe Burton were
both very friendly toward a cer-
tain woman in Lucasville, and the
possibility arose that if Harrison
did the shooting, he might have
thought it was his rival, Joe, sit-
ting by the window instead of Bill.
The brothers resembled each other.

So on Friday, on request of
Prosecutor Cameron Meachem, E.
E. Ridge, one of my deputies,
filed a charge of first-degree mur-
der against Harrison. Harrison
was taken to the murder scene that
night, and to view Bill Burton's
body in the undertaking parlors at
Lucasville, in the hope that he
might break. All he did was to
twitch his fingers nervously as he
viewed the body, and remark, "It's
awful."

The next day Prosecutor
Meachem ordered the arrest of
Harrison's sister, Mrs. Bosworth,
and her husband, becoming con-
vinced that they were lying as to
Harrison's whereabouts the night
of the murder. Mrs. Bosworth im-
mediately changed her story, and
said Harrison left her home right
after (Continued on page 59)

Riddle at Blue Goose

(Continued from page 43)

... did not return until just before sunrise arrived to arrest him. He was arrested in Portsmouth Municipal Court Monday, on a charge of first-degree murder. Harrison demanded a preliminary hearing which was held November 10. It was told by the witnesses, including Harrison in the vicinity of the crime at the time of the murder. He was emphatic under oath as they were sworn in but the net of circumstances was not Judge Horace Small to turn over to the Grand Jury for their consideration. After Harrison's hearing, I learned that Arthur Oakes, now our Chief Deputy Ross bring Frank Harrison to questioning. We had been told by many tips from people who said that Harrison was meeting Mary Burton at Turkey Creek, on Slater's Run, in the Blue Grass and other out-of-the-way places.

... had a ready explanation for the meetings. He told us Mary Burton was "from" for the bootlegging activities of her late husband and himself. The meetings were on strictly business. When Mary Burton was asked the story she told was along these lines:

... our Grand Jury met and considered the case against Harrison for bootlegging. On January 1st, 1933, Judge J. Smith succeeded Prosecutor Harrison in office. A few weeks later a grand jury took up the Burton case, and it, too, refused to indict Harrison. Six more months passed before we had no additional evidence, so Harrison was released. His sister and her husband had been released long before. All three were innocent of any connection with the crime.

... while Mary Burton was having trouble getting the insurance company to pay a \$1500 policy on her husband's life to settle. The policy was in the case of accidental death and the insurance company was willing to pay the policy but didn't want to double the face of the policy.

... the one of the assistant prosecutors in the office when Bill Burton was told to sue for Mary Burton's insurance company after his death. The company paid over the policy but demanded under the policy that you go to trial.

... the policy of the insurance company was based on rumors that Mary



Prosecuting Attorney Emory F. Smith (left) and his assistant, James B. White. They worked with the Sheriff's office in the search for the trigger-man.

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"It might be Billy, he has so many enemies," said Joe Burton (above), when he heard that someone had been shot.

Burton had been unduly intimate with Frank Wright—rumors both had vehemently denied to me as being untrue.

My second term as Sheriff began along with Prosecutor Smith's first term, and I kept hoping that I could break the case before I went out of office. I knew it couldn't be done unless the murder weapon were found.

During my eleven years as short-stop with the New York Giants and other National League baseball teams, I participated in many squeeze plays but never was I in so tight a place as when my days as Sheriff drew near a close and there was that murder case stranded on the bases, only needing a pinch single to bring it home.

Whenever my men were not otherwise engaged, I had them up there at Lucasville scouting around in the bushes, so to speak, trying to find that 12-gauge shotgun. Then, just two days before my second term as Sheriff ended, and within a few days of the second anniversary of the murder, the break came—mind you, nearly two years after the crime occurred.

Water in Millar's Run had begun to fall about the middle of October, 1934, and at 10:30 Sunday morning, October 21st, two boys hunting bullfrogs found a rusty, double-barreled, 12-gauge shotgun in the weeds. There were two shells in it, one empty and the other loaded. The latter was packed with No. 6 shot, the same kind as that taken from Bill Burton's head.

THE boys rushed to the home of Charles Burton, son of the slain man, with their find. He immediately identified the weapon as the property of his uncle, Joe Burton. The joy I experienced over the news can be imagined.

We rushed to Lucasville and grabbed Joe Burton. He acknowledged that he had owned the gun up until a few months before the murder, but said he had sold it in a second-hand store on Gallia Street in Portsmouth a few weeks prior to the tragedy. He couldn't account for the gun having been found in the water, nor could he pick out the store on Gallia Street.

The next day Deputy Oakes filed a charge of murder against Joe Burton. We again had a fairly good circumstantial case. First, he admitted he had owned the gun. Second, the blue-eyed bulldog not only had been moved from his accustomed place under the window, but, not barking at the appearance of the slayer, must have known him. Third, Joe had left the house a few minutes before the murder and for ten minutes of the half hour he was gone he could not account for his whereabouts. Fourth, he had approached the Jacobs' house from the

rear, from the direction of Miller's house. I had Sam Peebles, engineer of the county surveyor's office, do some measuring. He found that it was exactly 100 feet between the Burton and Jacobs' homes. It was 652 feet from the Jacobs' house to the creek where the gun was found, 100 feet from the creek to the Jacobs' home, and 448 feet from the place to the Jacobs' house. It took ten minutes to walk the distance to the creek, and Joe had been absent from the Blue Goose for half an hour.

It became apparent to me that there was a very important factor in the case. George Jacobs said that Joe Burton entered his house through the window after the shot was fired, and that he told Joe that Louis Green had been on the road to investigate, Joe must have known "It might be Billy, he has so many enemies." About fifteen minutes later he told us, the trio walked to the Jacobs' home.

Green said he did not meet Joe on his way to the Blue Goose, and Joe explained this by saying he had stepped off to go toward the creek for a minute before, if necessary, then returned to the house. Trying the front door of the Jacobs' house and finding it locked, we went around to the rear and entered by the window.

THE smaller footprints found about the window that fateful night two years before, fitted Joe Burton's shoes so well down hard on the question, for many days and nights Joe denied that he was his brother, knew he was to be charged, was implicated in any way. Finally kneeling in prayer at a prison on the Constable Jacobs, Joe Burton made a confession involving himself, Frank Wright and his brother's wife, Mary Burton.

Before the tale began, Joe Burton haled all the air in his lungs. No one was surprised at this preliminary confession. He explained that he and Wright had entered into a "blood pact" never to "mess up." "Wright and I used his pocket knife to prick our left arms," explained Joe. "I waited until the blood flowed, then he held each other's right hands and promised never to tell the murder plot as long as there was air in our bodies."

Commenting that the air was now out of his body, Joe began a tale from its inception eighteen months before the murder, when he, Wright and Mary Burton decided that Bill Burton might be interested in promoting a love affair between Bill's eighteen-year-old daughter, Carrie Burton, and himself. What he told us, wanted Bill out of the way, he could continue illicit relations with his wife, Mary.

In preparation for the crime, Joe



County Investigator Cyrus Kell. He prepared decoy notes with which to trap the accused.



Charles W. R. Jacobs, the first man to reach the scene of the murder at the Blue Goose

...a pistol owned by Wright, traded for a shotgun, and gave the shotgun to Wright. As an alibi, he and Wright took the shotgun and told friends they were going to Portsmouth to sell. After the trip to Portsmouth, they returned the gun in Wright's machine and said they had sold it.

On the day of the murder, Mary Burton had moved a dresser from near a window on the west side of the house so her husband would be forced to sit in his chair by the window that night. The dresser was moved, the boxes and chairs by the children were arranged so that a vacant space was left at a window for Bill. After the evening tea, Mr. Burton and the children stood themselves behind the stove, out of

...his hours before the shooting, Joe had a sealed note from Mary Burton to Wright, he said, feeling at the time it contained directions for the murder that night. He didn't want to be in a house when his brother was killed, so he slipped out for the Jacobs' home. He slipped Wright, standing in a ditch with a noose, and as he reached the Jacobs' house heard the shot. Joe told us Wright had threatened him with death if he would.

MARY BURTON related that after the men were found he had said to Wright and Mary Burton: "We three are in a fix and there is no use of any of us trying to get out of the ring. We are all in it and we might as well tell the truth, a man will out. We had what we thought were good alibis, but we were just in. We thought we were taking the men for a ride, but instead they were taking us for a ride."

Following the confession of Joe Burton, Wright placed his brother's widow and Mary under arrest. Mary Burton made 10 dozen statements, alternately naming Wright and Joe Burton as the trigger man. She admitted having been Joe's paramour for a period of eight years at the Wright place, in her own home and at various rendezvous.

"Long time ago Joe wanted me to tell him I would give him so much money to kill Bill and I wouldn't do it, and so he said he was going to do it anyway," began the widow of the victim. "So he and Wright and I got together and talked about it and Frank said to go ahead and do it and keep my mouth shut.

"I wanted Bill killed because he was mean to me and was jealous of Frank. Joe wanted Bill killed because he was mean to him and so that he could be with Carrie. Frank wanted Bill killed so that he could be with me. We were together every chance we got, especially while Bill was in jail for making liquor. They all made liquor and I sold it.

"Joe told me that day he was going to kill Bill. I saw him get the gun. He had it hidden at the creek. At dark Joe left the house to take some tools to the neighbor, and Bill said to hurry back. Joe looked at me and grinned. He first planned to wait for Bill to walk out on to the back porch. When Joe left, I knew he was going to shoot Bill, and I sat in the kitchen waiting for the shot."

Mary Burton related that Wright told Joe Burton to toss the gun into Millar's Run. She said that three days after the shooting Joe admitted he was the one who put the gun against the window pane and fired. Joe told her, she continued, that he had to wait until some automobiles passed. After the shooting, Mary Burton said, Joe tossed the gun in the creek. When the officers began to search for it there, Joe wanted Wright to help fish it out and hide it somewhere else, but Wright refused. Mrs. Burton quoted Joe as telling her.

In a later statement Mrs. Burton named Frank Wright as the actual assassin.

"I SAYS to him, 'Frank, did you kill Bill; are you the one that killed him?'" said Mrs. Burton. "He said, 'I am the man. No—ever gives me the lie and gets away with it.' I said to him, 'What did you do with the gun?' and he answered, 'Ran down the creekway and threw it in a hole in the water' and then added, 'I don't mind a little thing like that.' That is all I remember him saying."

The daughter, Carrie Burton, admitted that she had been keenly interested in her Uncle Joe since she was fifteen years of age. She said that Joe had told her he was the one who killed her father.

Frank Wright admitted having had knowledge of the murder plan, but firmly denied participating in it. He told us he had said nothing about it because he didn't think that Joe Burton would carry out his threat. He confessed, however, that the victim's wife had been his clandestine sweetheart for years.

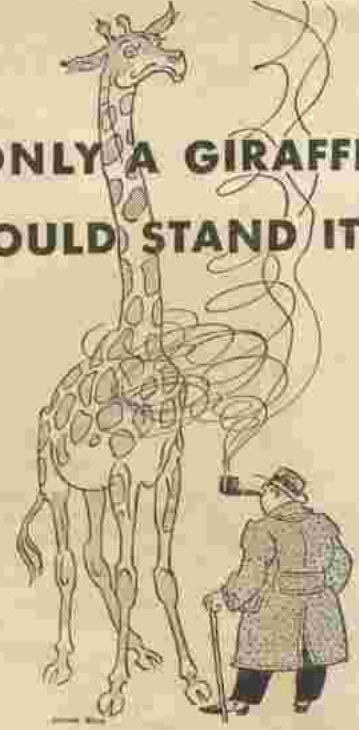
We had established the hour of the murder at 6:45 p. m. by a witness who had looked at his watch when he heard the shotgun. The large footprints under the Blue Goose window could have been made by Wright, so we checked his whereabouts that night. Wright lived about three miles from the Burton place. John McMillan told us that he left his home, a quarter of a mile from the Wright place, at 6:45 that fateful Thursday night, bound for the Wright home.

McMillan had been husking corn and his wrist was swollen, he recalled, so when his mother told him to get home early he looked at his watch and noted the time. He said it took ten minutes to walk over and that he waited twenty minutes before Wright drove in with his son. McMillan said Frank Wright usually played the banjo when he had company, but that night he strummed on the strings for only "half a piece" and then laid the banjo aside.

Wright denied that he participated in the plans, other than to listen to Joe or Mary Burton. He said he tried to induce them not to kill Bill Burton.

"Bill knew for several years that his wife and I were intimate," said Wright,

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"but he did not seem to care. Sometimes when I would call at his house he would go out, leaving us alone together. Bill and I were the best of friends, working together for ten years. We made liquor, and Mary bootlegged it."

Wright said he did not hear of his friend's death until twenty-four hours after it had occurred. In support of his contention that he was at home when the murder was committed, Wright referred us to his son-in-law and daughter. They said they were parked in Wright's yard, waiting for him, and that he came home at a time which would have made it impossible for him to have been the trigger man.

Wright told us that he had stated that Joe Burton had pawned the shotgun in Portsmouth, because Joe and Mary Burton had asked him to.

Wright admitted he had not visited the Burton home for eight months after the murder because he feared his presence there would cause suspicion against him in view of his intimacy with Mrs. Burton.

In all, Mary Burton signed three statements, alternating the blame between her lover and her brother-in-law. She said she "loved Wright a little" and agreed with Wright that she did not see him for eight months after the murder. At that time she went to Wright's shack in the hollow, she said, because she heard another woman was there.

AT breakfast on the day he was killed, her husband put his arms around her, told her he had dreamed something was going to happen—a death in the family—and warned her to be careful; the widow related.

The Grand Jury indicted Wright, Joe Burton and Mary Burton for first-degree murder on the conspiracy theory. In the hope of clarifying the matter as to who actually fired the shot, Sheriff Arthur Oakes, a deputy who succeeded me in office January 1st, 1935, arranged to make the passing of notes in jail among the trio an easy matter.

The Prosecutor, Emory F. Smith; his assistant, James B. Miller, and County Investigator Cyrus Kahl worked with the Sheriff's office. Kahl and Constable Jacobs prepared some decoy notes, signed with Frank Wright's initials, and smuggled them to Mary Burton to start the ball rolling. A trusty was the intermediary.

The suspects rose to the bait like a trout to a fly. The love letters became known as "pie plate notes," as Mary Burton usually bought a pie for Wright, and sent her notes concealed between the pie and a paper plate. It got so that every time Mary Burton sent out for a pie we knew she was going to write a note.

The officials either made copies of the notes before they were delivered, or confiscated the originals. In one, Mary Burton wrote to Wright:

Baby, how are you. I don't feel good at all this morning. Hope you feel fine. Baby, I wish I could see you. Honey, I will send some money to get a book to read. Oh, baby, how well I love you God only knows.

In another "pie plate note," the accused widow seemed optimistic. She wrote to her lover:

I wish I could be with you. How glad I will be when things are straightened up. Stay with me baby—I am your friend. If you need anything, send me a note.

The notes did not bring out the identity of the trigger man, and Prosecutor Smith went to trial without this knowledge. Joe

Burton faced Common Pleas Judge Kimble and a jury of six men and six women, late in March, 1935.

The case reached the jury on Wednesday, March 27th, at 5 p. m. It deliberated until 11:30 p. m., then was locked up for the night. At 9 a. m. Thursday, resumed session and at noon announced was ready to report. For twenty hours the first day, one man had held out for the electric chair. On Thursday morning a woman joined the man. The vote then ten to two for mercy for ten hours. Then the man joined the majority and finally the woman.

So Joe Burton drew a life term, and the mark of Cain was placed upon his brow.

Mary Burton's case was presented before Judge Kimble and a jury of five men and seven women, beginning April 1st. Mrs. Burton indulged alternately in fits of tears and laughter as she took the stand in her own defense. First she pictured her home life with the murder victim as happy, then as a continual battle. She admitted being intimate with Wright and testified that her husband was jealous of her paramour.

The accused woman repudiated her previous confessions, claiming they were made during periods in which she was not responsible for her acts because of illness. She named half a dozen ailments and completed the story of her diseases with the declaration that physicians had informed her "something was wrong with her head."

Mrs. Burton told the jury that a lawyer had charged her \$400 to collect her \$3000 insurance on her husband's life and that she had spent most of the \$300 buying a home for herself and lots for her grown sons. She recited proudly the payment of \$250 for the slain man's case and \$50 for a tombstone. She said some of the money went to Joe Burton and Frank Wright.

Through testimony of her grown son Norman, who was in Columbus with Carrie Burton at the time of the murder, developed that a letter had reached Blue Goose the day before the murder announcing that Carrie was coming home two days later. This, Prosecutor Smith argued, hastened the murder plan. Joe Burton knew that his brother was watching him and his niece.

CARRIE BURTON, who had been in jail for two weeks, was released before the trials in order to marry. No charges were preferred against her.

Joe Burton was placed on the witness stand in Mary Burton's trial. In an motion for a new trial was pending at the time, and he refused to testify on the ground that his testimony might incriminate him. He declined to answer a specific question as to whether on the night of the murder he saw Wright in the vicinity, although at his own trial he had testified he saw Wright with a shotgun in his hands a few minutes before the murder.

The arbiters of Mrs. Burton's life deliberated for three hours. On April 1st their verdict recommending mercy and the unfaithful wife from the electric chair but sent her to the Marysville Women Reformatory for life.

Before Frank Wright's trial began on April 22nd, his counsel filed a motion asking that the State present a bill of particulars. Prosecutor Smith complied with this statement:

The State expects to show that for more than a year Wright and Mary Burton were infatuated with each other, that William Burton had knowledge thereof and made his objections known to both of them; that

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this affectionate relationship existed until William Burton's death and because of the interference of William Burton with their full and complete enjoyment of their desires with one another, and of the desire of Mary Burton to collect insurance that her husband carried on his life. Frank Wright, Mary Burton and Joe Burton conspired to kill William Burton and on the evening of October 27th, 1932, Wright and Joe Burton met outside and on the west side of the Burton home in accordance with such conspiracy, either Joe Burton or Frank Wright pointed a shotgun toward William Burton, who sat in the middle room of his said home and just in front of the window on the west side thereof, and caused said shotgun to be discharged and the shot therefrom to strike the left side of the head of William Burton; which resulted in William Burton's death.

CONSTABLE JACOBS testified he saw a small green coupé or roadster, which he thought belonged to Wright, containing a man he thought was Wright, speed past the Burton home a few minutes after the murder.

Wright said he owned a black car at the time of the tragedy.

Wright had a ready explanation for two statements he had signed while in jail, in which he had admitted that on several occasions Joe and Mary Burton discussed the murder plan with him. The defendant told the jury he signed the statements, not paying much attention to their contents, because he was worried. He denied Joe Burton's story of a "blood pact."

The jury believed the argument of defense counsel that Joe Burton and Mary Burton, both found guilty of Bill's murder, were at that time "trying to frame" Wright. After three hours deliberation on April 26th it returned a verdict of acquittal for Wright.

(To shield the identity of innocent persons, the names Frank Wright, Jack Wright, Fred Harrison, John Bosworth and Mrs. John Bosworth used in this story are not real, but fictitious.—Ed.)



Judge B. F. Kimble, who presided at the trial of the sinister slayer.

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